THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

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THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS
THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS

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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION

By the Reverend Principal Vincent Taylor, D.D.

The Epistle to the Galatians is one of the greatest of St Paul's letters, being second in importance only to the Epistle to the Romans which, in its doctrinal teaching, it closely resembles. From the latter it differs in the strong feeling by which it is pervaded, ranging from surprise and pain to indignation and even anger, and in the presence of historical details which are recalled before the doctrinal arguments are presented and the urgent ethical exhortations are made. Its importance through the Christian centuries cannot be exaggerated, especially at the Reformation, and to-day it expresses great truths, in particular the doctrine of Salvation by Faith, without which Christianity cannot live. In what follows some account of its character, origins, and special problems will be given, since a knowledge of these is essential to the use and understanding of the Epistle.

The Circumstances Implied.—From i. 6 it is clear that Paul was astonished at tidings which had reached him concerning the defection of the Galatian Christians from the purity of the gospel he had preached. 'I marvel,' he writes, 'that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you . . . unto a different gospel; which is not another.' 'So quickly' does not mean so soon after Paul's departure, but 'so precipitately' after the appearance of Judaizing teachers who had insisted that circumcision was necessary (v. 2–12, vi. 11–16), and had depreciated the position of Paul himself and called into question his apostleship and ability to interpret the gospel (i. 10, v. 11). It is for this reason that Paul at once asserts that he is 'an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)' (i. 1). His indignation flames out in the cry: 'O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly placarded as crucified?' (iii. 1), but this is matched by the tenderness of his appeal: 'My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you, yea, I could wish to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I am perplexed about you' (iv. 19f.), and by the sadness of his reproof: 'Ye were running well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?' (v. 7).

The Contents of the Epistle.—After an introduction, in which Paul mentions the circumstances in which he writes (i. 1–10), he describes relevant points in his history, especially his two visits to Jerusalem, by which he shows that, while his gospel was not from men, it was nevertheless in agreement with that of the Jerusalem Apostles (i. 11–ii. 21). Then follows the doctrinal section (iii. 1–v. 1), in which he discusses the relation of the gospel to the Law, and an ethical section (v. 2–vi. 10) containing exhortations to maintain freedom and to live the life of the Spirit. Finally, the letter contains a postscript written by Paul himself.

The Genuineness of the Epistle.—The letter was known to Polycarp and Justin Martyr and is included in Marcion's Canon and the Muratorian Fragment. Recognized as Paul's even by the Tübingen School of F. C. Baur, it bears in itself its own signature, and is accepted as genuine with hardly a dissentient voice.

The Critical Problems of the Epistle.—The main questions concern: (1) the identity of the two visits to Jerusalem described in Gal. i. 18f.

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and ii. 1–10 ; (2) the destination of the Epistle ; (3) the date and place of composition. None of these questions can be regarded as settled, but they are of considerable interest and importance, and some account of them will be given below.

The Identity of the Visits to Jerusalem.—The problem is created by the fact that, whereas Paul refers to two visits, Luke describes three in Acts ix. 26ff., xi. 27–30 (xii. 25) and xv. 1–29. No serious difficulty is raised by the first visit : Gal. i. 18f.=Acts ix. 26ff. The problem is the identity of Gal. ii. 10. Is it (*a*) the visit of Acts xi. ; or (*b*) that of Acts xv. ; or (*c*) that of Acts xi.+xv. ; or (*d*) did it precede Acts xi. and xv. ? The first view is maintained by W. M. Ramsay, K. Lake (formerly), and G. S. Duncan. The second hypothesis, strongly argued by J. B. Lightfoot in his Commentary on Galatians, is the one most widely accepted. The third is advocated by Lake in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, v. 195ff., and the fourth by T. W. Manson in *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 59–80. In mentioning these visits Paul's aim is to prove his independence of the Jerusalem Apostles ; and, as a guiding principle, preference ought to be given to his statements where they cannot be harmonized with those of Luke.

(*a*) *The Identity of Gal. ii.* 1–10 *and Acts xi.*—(1) The strength of this hypothesis is that it avoids difficulties which arise if Gal. ii.=Acts xv. We have no longer to explain why Paul does not mention the Famine Visit (Acts xi.) and the Decree of Acts xv. 28f., and there is no need to account for the fact that Paul's narrative implies a *private* discussion whereas Acts xv. describes a *public* session.

(2) An advantage of the proposed identification is that Paul's assurance that he went up to Jerusalem 'by revelation' harmonizes with Luke's statement that Agabus 'signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world' (Acts xi. 28). A further advantage is that, on this view, the dispute at Antioch, when Peter ceased to eat with Gentiles and was rebuked by Paul (Gal. ii. 11ff.), precedes the Apostolic Council of Acts xv. Again, Paul's claim that the only condition laid upon him, that he should 'remember the poor,' agrees well with the circumstances of the 'Famine Visit' of Acts xi., since on that occasion he and Barnabas brought relief from Antioch to 'the brethren in Judæa' (Acts xi. 29f.).

In addition to its positive merits, the attraction of this hypothesis is the explanation it affords of the difficulties of the older hypothesis which identifies Gal. ii. with Acts xv. It is, however, the claim of those who adhere to the older view, that the difficulties are not insuperable and that this identification is more solidly based.

(*b*) *The Identity of Gal. ii.* 1–10 *with Acts xv.*—The main argument is the fact that both accounts deal with the freedom of the Gentiles and that in each the victory is won by Paul. In each case the demand for circumcision is made, and in each it is rejected : in Gal. ii. as regards Titus (ii. 3–5) [1] and when the Apostles give the right hand of fellowship to Paul (ii. 9) ; in Acts xv. in the speech of Peter (7–11), the judgment of James (19), and the agreement not to lay upon the Gentiles any greater burden than certain necessary food laws (28 f.). Not one of these points emerges in Acts xi. Unless, therefore, the difficulties forbid, the case is conclusive.

The objection that, according to Acts xv. 2, Paul and Barnabas are sent by the Church at Antioch, whereas in Gal. ii. 2 Paul goes 'by revelation,' is not serious, for the two statements are not contradictory ; nor does a private discussion (Gal. ii. 2) preclude a Church session (Acts xv. 12). The further objection that, on this view, Paul omits to mention the visit of Acts xi. is more serious, but, despite all that has been said to the contrary, it is not insuperable. The 'Famine Visit' may have been omitted through inadvertence, or because Paul did not regard it as important for his purpose, or because he did not meet the Apostles on this occasion.

The greatest difficulty is that Paul does not refer to the Decree of Acts xv. 28f. which laid down the conditions in which Gentiles might

[1] For the claim that Titus was circumcised see F. C. Burkitt, *Christian Beginnings*, 118 : 'Who can doubt that it was the knife that really did circumcise Titus that has cut the syntax of Gal. ii. 3–5 to pieces' ; G. S. Duncan, *The Moffatt New Testament Commentary : Galatians*, 43–48 ; A. D. Nock, *St. Paul*, 109. Nock suggests that, on his own initiative and without consulting Paul, Titus submitted to circumcision in the hope of easing a difficult situation. Burkitt's view is supported by the omission of οὐδέ in Gal. ii. 5 D d e and by Irenæus, Tertullian, Victorinus, and other early authorities. The text is discussed by Burton, *ICC : Galatians*, 84f. who concludes that the evidence against the negative 'is not sufficient to overcome the strong preponderance in its favour.'

enjoy table-fellowship with Jews: abstinence 'from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.' And coupled with this is the improbability that Peter would have drawn back and ceased to eat with Gentiles after this Decree had been promulgated.

Various attempts to overcome this difficulty have been made. (1) Harnack accepted the reading of Codex D, which transforms the Decree from a food law to an ethical precept by omitting the phrase 'things strangled' and by adding the Golden Rule and a reference to the Holy Spirit. This reading, however, is an obvious attempt to remove a difficulty, and it is highly improbable that such a minimum as abstinence from idolatry, fornication, and murder would ever have been proposed as a basis for table-fellowship.[1] (2) Other scholars have held that the objection makes too much of the Decree. Manson has suggested that it was no more than 'a working compromise,' which Paul might have accepted since 'it involved no sacrifice of principle.'[2] (3) For those who are not satisfied with this explanation a bolder hypothesis is open. Luke may have mistakenly connected with the Apostolic Council a Decree which belonged to a later time.[3] To telescope events in a record is by no means unusual (cf. Luke xxiv., in which the Resurrection and Ascension fall within a period of twenty-four hours, in contrast with the forty days of Acts i. 3). Further, in Acts xxi. 25 the elders tell Paul of the Decree as though it were something new. On the whole, this is the best explanation of the difficulty, and, if it is accepted, the strong arguments for identifying Gal. ii. with Acts xv. must prevail.

(*c*) *The Identity of Gal. ii.* 1–10 *with Acts xi.+xv.*—If with Kirsopp Lake,[4] following Weizsäcker, McGiffert, and Schwartz, we regard Acts xi. and xv. as different accounts of the same visit, derived from different sources, most of the difficulties discussed above melt away; but such a critical theory is highly speculative and the problem of the Decree remains.

[1] Cf. Manson, *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 24, no. 1, p. 75, who says: 'It is too ridiculous to be credible.'

[2] *Op. cit.*, 78. Cf. also C. H. Watkins: 'The specially-mentioned exceptions have come to be thought both more important and more severe than they originally were,' *St Paul's Fight for Galatia*, 209.

[3] Cf. W. F. Howard, *The Study Bible: Acts*, 144–146.

[4] *The Beginnings of Christianity*, v. 195–212.

(*d*) *Does Gal. ii.* 1–10 *precede Acts xi. and xv.?*—T. W. Manson has suggested that Gal. ii. 1–10 does not resemble what is described either in Acts xi. or in Acts xv. The private conference between Paul and the Jerusalem Apostles was conducted in a friendly spirit, without any contentious matters arising, and it ended in a sensible allocation of missionary tasks. In support of this view Manson argues that the confused passage, Gal. ii. 4f. (the circumcision of Titus), describes what happened later.[1] A similar view has been put forward independently by Dom Bernard Orchard.[2]

It is a distinct merit of this hypothesis that, if it is accepted, Peter's defection at Antioch precedes the Apostolic Council; but, otherwise, little is gained since Manson dates the Epistle after the Council, maintaining that Paul does not mention the Decree because at the time of writing he no longer regarded it as binding. Objection also may be taken to the conjectural explanation given to Gal. ii. 4f. But the main criticism this suggestion has to meet is the broad similarity between Gal. ii. 1–10 and Acts xv. Can the Apostolic Council have been held *after* such a meeting as Paul describes?

Our conclusion stands that it is better to identify Gal. ii. 1–10 with Acts xv., with the qualification that this identification would be easier to accept if it could be proved that Acts xi. and Acts xv. describe the same visit.

The Destination of the Epistle: North or South Galatia.—It cannot yet be said that the conflict of opinion between those who hold that the Churches of Galatia were those of the north, and those who maintain that they were in the south, has been settled, although the tendency of modern scholars is to accept the South Galatian Theory. According to the North Galatian Theory the Churches of Galatia were in the old Kingdom of Galatia, in the towns of Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium, or possibly, as

[1] Manson takes the sense of ii. 4f. to be: 'The issue of compulsory circumcision did not arise on this occasion, though Titus who was with me was an obvious case being a Greek. When at a later time it was brought up it was through certain interlopers and bogus Christians . . . and *in your interests* we refused absolutely to make any concessions' (*op. cit.*, 67).

[2] *The Journal of Theological Studies*, xliii. [July–October, 1942] 173–177. Orchard suggests that the missing verb and subject in the obscure sentence in ii. 4f. ('But because of false brethren privily brought in . . .') may be supplied by the words: 'The freedom of the Gentiles is now being endangered.'

later advocates think, in the neighbourhood of the more western towns of Dorylaion, Nakoleia, and Kotiaion; according to the South Galatian Theory they were the Christians of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, in the southern part of the Roman province.[1]

The marked difference of opinion[2] is largely due to the ambiguity of the geographical passages, Acts xvi. 6 and xviii. 23, from which dubious inferences have been drawn on both sides. It will be of advantage, therefore, to consider these passages first, in order to determine, as far as possible, what Luke means.

Acts xvi. 6 *and xviii.* 23.—In Acts xvi. 6 Luke says: 'And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.' He explains that, when they came over against Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but were again prevented by the Spirit of Jesus: they therefore passed by Mysia and came down to Troas. In xviii. 23, he says that they departed from Antioch (in Syria) 'and went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, stablishing all the disciples.'

In these passages much discussion has turned on the question whether one district, 'the Phrygo-Galatic region,' is meant or two, 'Phrygia' and 'the Galatic region.' Probably one district is meant, at least in xvi. 6, but this question is subordinate in interest to that of the locality. Is the reference to north or to south Galatia?

W. M. Ramsay[3] held tenaciously to the view that Luke meant the southern part of the Roman province which had formerly been Phrygia, the country around Antioch and Iconium, but it is very doubtful if this opinion can be sustained. Luke says that the missionaries went into the region in question because they were forbidden by the Spirit to preach in Asia. This statement naturally suggests a journey northwards through country that was partly Phrygian and partly Galatian in the general direction of Nakoleia and Dorylaion.[1] In support of his argument Ramsay defended the inferior reading 'having gone through' and took the Greek aorist participle in the sense of *subsequent* action. Neither contention is sound. The best MSS read 'they went through' and the participle expresses *antecedent* (or *contemporaneous*) action *causal* in force. It was *because* the missionaries were forbidden to speak the word in Asia (to the West) that they went into 'the Phrygo-Galatic region.' Chase[2] goes so far as to suggest that 'the South Galatian theory is shipwrecked on the rock of Greek grammar.' This *obiter dicta* is much too sweeping, but it is a just retort to Ramsay's argument.

Does, then, Acts xvi. 6 support the North Galatian Theory? Its supporters say 'Yes,' but for the most part they have suggested a journey north-east in the direction of Pessinus and Ancyra. This reconstruction is completely unsatisfactory, for such a journey would have brought the missionaries over against Bithynia, whereas Luke's phrase is 'when they were over against Mysia,' that is, at a point some two hundred miles farther west. We may, therefore, adapt the words of Chase and say that, in this form, the North Galatian Theory is shipwrecked on the rock of geography.

The position is different when modern North Galatianists locate the Churches of Galatia in Kotiaion, Nakoleia, and Dorylaion. Yet even so, their argument fails, since Luke says nothing whatever about preaching or founding churches, but only that they 'went through' the region.[3] The only Galatian Churches whose founding he describes are those of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Moreover, while the locality traversed according to Acts xviii. 23 is uncertain, the passage used can easily and naturally refer to these very Churches. We reach, then, the conclusion that Paul passed through North Galatia, but founded churches in South Galatia.

The South Galatian Theory.—The arguments in favour of this theory are as follows: (1)

[1] The Roman province included, not only the old kingdom founded by invading Gauls in the third century B.C., but also parts of Phrygia to which Antioch and Iconium belonged, and of Lycaonia in which Derbe and Lystra were situated.

[2] Among the principal supporters of the North Galatian Theory are Lightfoot, Schürer, Wendt, Schmiedel, Jülicher, Moffatt, Chase, Findlay, Lietzmann, and Lagrange, while those who hold the South Galatian Theory include Ramsay, Zahn, J. Weiss, Weizsäcker, McGiffert, Bacon, Bartlet, Rackham, Peake, McNeile, Burton, and Duncan.

[3] In his two brilliantly written books, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D.* 170 [1893] and *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* [1895].

[1] So Lake, *op. cit.*, 231 ff., who formerly was of Ramsay's opinion.

[2] *The Expositor*, IV. viii. 401–419.

[3] Ramsay argued that the verb used implies a missionary journey, but, although it is often used in missionary contexts, it implies only a journey, not a special kind of journey.

Taken as a whole, Luke's statements favour this hypothesis rather than its rival (see above).

(2) Paul says that it was in consequence of an illness that he evangelized the Galatian Churches (Gal. iv. 13). This illness can easily have been contracted in the low-lying country about Perga, and this may be the reason why he went to Antioch which lies south of the Sultan Dagh. It is less likely that he would have travelled farther north 'because of an infirmity of the flesh' or during his convalescence, since, in the opinion of Ramsay, the climate of North Galatia is not suitable.

(3) The statement 'even Barnabas was carried away' (ii. 13) has special force if the Epistle was sent to South Galatia, for Barnabas was with Paul when the Churches in that region were founded. It is true that he is mentioned in 1 Cor. ix. 6 ('Or I only and Barnabas, have we not the right to forbear working?'), but the emphasis present in Gal. ii. 13 is there wanting.

(4) From Galatians we know that Paul was accused of preaching circumcision (v. 11) and of being anxious to please men (i. 10). These charges are intelligible if the Churches are those of South Galatia, since it was there that Paul circumcised Timothy 'because of the Jews that were in those parts' (Acts xvi. 3). He was embarrassed by 'a local incident.'

(5) The Churches of Galatia contributed to the Apostolic Collection (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 1). It is interesting, therefore, to find among the delegates mentioned in Acts xx. 4 'Gaius of Derbe and Timothy.' It is true that the list does not include representatives from Corinth, Philippi, and Achaia. Nevertheless, it is significant that the only Galatians mentioned are from the south.

These are the main arguments which favour the South Galatian Theory. Undoubtedly the case is strong, and the opinion may be hazarded that it might have won almost general acceptance if its advocates had not tried to read too much into Acts xvi. 6.

The North Galatian Theory.—(1) The main support of this theory has always been sought in Acts xvi. 6. It is maintained above that this geographical passage forbids the attempt to find the Churches of Galatia in Pessinus, Ancyra, and Tavium, and is unfavourable to later suggestions [1] which locate them in or about Nakoleia, Kotiaion, and Dorylaion, since Luke says nothing about the founding of churches during the journey. Paul travelled in these regions; he had already founded the Churches of Galatia.

(2) A second argument has often been based on the close doctrinal agreement between Galatians and Romans. On the North Galatian Theory, it has been claimed the interval of composition is short, perhaps only a few months. Against this contention it may be justly urged that arguments based on doctrinal affinities are precarious, and that, in any case, not all South Galatianists date the Epistle early (see below on the question of date).

(3) Little is added by the suggestion, sometimes made, that Paul claims too much in Rom. xv. 19 [1] if the chief cities of Galatia had not been evangelized. The passage is somewhat rhetorical. Moreover, so far as we know, the cities of Bithynia and Cappadocia had not even been visited.

(4) A stronger contention is that Paul's manifest assumption of unqualified authority is strange if the Galatian Churches were those of the south. Why does he not mention the prominent part played by Barnabas? The difficulty is real, and the solution can only be sought in the Apostle's personality and in the probability that, after the sharp contention described in Acts xv. 39, Paul came to feel an exclusive responsibility for these Churches.

(5) Like the preceding argument, other points made in favour of North Galatia are replies to difficulties left over by the rival hypothesis. Could Paul have addressed the Christians of South Galatia as 'Galatians'? The answer is that by no other comprehensive term could he have addressed them as a group. The inhabitants of Antioch and Iconium were not Lycaonians, neither were those of Derbe and Lystra Phrygians. It was neither possible nor prudent to use ethnological names. Other arguments are inconclusive. It may well be that Luke did not wish to mention the defection of the Galatians, but in no way does this imply that they belonged to the north. It is true also that Paul did not always write to Churches of first rank, since he wrote to the Christians of Colossæ, but this contention merely rebuts arguments based on a supposed knowledge of Paul's evangelistic strategy.

Doubtless the battle between the protagonists

[1] Cf. Moffatt, *Introduction*, 94*n*.

[1] 'So that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.'

of the two hypotheses will continue to be waged. The present writer has little doubt that the Churches of Galatia were those of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

The Date of Galatians.—This question is naturally affected by the view we take of the identity of the visit to Jerusalem described in ii. 1–10. The main point to determine is whether the Epistle precedes or follows the Apostolic Council of Acts xv.

(1) Some South Galatianists date the letter before the Council, this making it the earliest Pauline Epistle. Those who take this view identify Gal. ii. 1–10 with Acts xi. or with a still earlier visit, finding the second contact with the Churches (if Gal. iv. 13 implies two visits) in the return journey of Acts xiv. On this view the Epistle was written A.D. 48–49 at Antioch in Syria or on the way to the Council.

(2) Other supporters of the South Galatian Theory, identifying Gal. ii. 1–10 with Acts xv., date the Epistle after the Council. Some place it before Acts xvi. 1–6 and assign its place of composition to Antioch. Others, with greater probability, think that the circumcision of Timothy must be presupposed, and that the letter was written on the second missionary journey in Macedonia or Achaia (Corinth or Athens). This is the better alternative, for it is unlikely that Paul would have circumcised Timothy *after* the defection of the Galatians. On this view the date is A.D. 51–52.

(3) Nevertheless, the South Galatian Theory does not preclude a still later date, after the second missionary journey or even during the third.

(4) Most North Galatianists date the Epistle during the third missionary journey at Ephesus after the visit of Acts xviii. 23. On this view the letter was written during the period to which 1 and 2 Corinthians belong, and not long before Romans, about the year A.D. 55.

No confident decision is possible. A date before the Council should probably be rejected in view of the circumcision of Timothy. On the whole, there is most to be said for A.D. 51–52, with Macedonia, Athens, or Corinth as the place of composition.

The Doctrinal Argument.—The detailed study of iii. 1–v. 1 belongs to the Commentary. In an Introduction, however, it is desirable to consider the character of the doctrinal argument and its bearings on the general problems raised by the Epistle. Is it possible, for example, to infer from Paul's defence what kind of arguments the Judaizers used and how they appealed to the Galatian Christians ?

The section begins with an appeal to experience. How did the Galatians receive the Spirit ? Was it the result of obedience to the Law or of the response of faith ? The Apostle's belief is obvious : not legalism, but faith, is the basis of the Christian life. It is the vigorous assertion of this principle which gives to the Epistle its abiding value. And this principle is quite independent of the various arguments by which it is enforced. Thus, in the section Paul uses a method of exegesis which was fully in accordance with the ideas of his time but is now antiquated, thanks to the critical study of the Scriptures. Insight is shown in the selection of the example of Abraham, who 'believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness' (iii. 6), and in the consequent inference that men of faith are 'sons of Abraham' (iii. 7) and come within the scope of the ancient promise : 'In thee shall all the nations be blessed.' It is true also that those who seek their salvation by doing the works of the Law are 'under a curse,' but the modern mind is conscious of a sense of strain in the argument, when this fact is deduced from the curses pronounced in the Law upon disobedience. In the same manner the truth that a man is given his standing with God by reason of faith is not strengthened by suspending it on a proof text, even one so great as the statement of Habakkuk that 'the righteous shall live by faith,' all the more because the prophet meant 'fidelity.' The good news that Christ became a curse for us is imperishable, if by this we mean, as indeed Paul meant, that of His own will and in love He shouldered the consequences of human sin ; but it gains no relevance from the passage : 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' Nor again can we follow Paul's Rabbinical argument that because the promise to Abraham extends to his seed (used in the singular), therefore Christ is meant, while there is dialectical skill rather than religious force in the contention that the original promise is not rendered void by the Law given hundreds of years later. All these arguments must have come with shattering force to those who shared

Paul's exegetical canons; to the modern Christian his positive faith-principle shines in its own light.

Much more cogent is his view of the temporary character of the Law, added because of transgressions, and fulfilling a necessary purpose until the coming of Christ, that, namely, of a custodian, and with Paul we exult that, now that faith has come, we are no longer 'under a custodian,' but are all 'sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus' (iii. 25f.). The reminder of what baptism means, and the claim that in Christ self-exclusive distinctions of race, class, and sex are abolished, are for all time.

The contrast drawn in Gal. iv. between the state of the Galatians in their pagan days and the freedom gained in Christ is very relevant to modern times when men fancy that Christianity is a luxury. As pagans the Galatians were like heirs under the dominance of guardians and stewards, religiously in bondage to the elemental spirits of the world. But the sending forth of God's Son, 'born of a woman, born under the law,' meant redemption and 'the adoption of sons.' Nay more; it meant the gift of the Spirit of God's Son whereby the heart cries 'Father!,' so that, no longer a slave, each man is a son, and therefore 'an heir through God.' No wonder Paul could ask the Galatians how it was that, having come to know God, or rather to be known of Him, they were ready, in consequence of legalism, to resume their chains! So tragic is that issue that Paul recalls the contrast between their former loving reception of him with their present coldness and warns them against their false friends. Like some of the arguments already mentioned, his allegorical use of the story of Hagar belongs to his time, but his exhortation: 'With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be ye not entangled again in yoke of bondage' (v. 1), is for every succeeding age. In short, despite archaic arguments, in affirming the supremacy of faith over legalism, and the necessity of a religion of the Spirit over against the claims of moralism, the Epistle to the Galatians is a sheet anchor of the Christian Faith.

The Hortatory Section.—In the words just quoted, the Epistle reaches its ethical section, or, as better described, its hortatory division (v. 2–vi. 10). It is important, however, to recognize that there is no separation between the two sections. Paul has no ethics which are not at the same time doctrine, and no doctrine which is not also ethical in its applications. It is easy for the modern reader to detach exhortations like 'Bear ye one another's burdens' (vi. 2) and 'Let us not be weary in well-doing' (vi. 9), or even a sublime passage like 'For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (v. 14), from their doctrinal roots, and to imagine that they can live of themselves. But to do this is wholly to misunderstand Paul and to surrender to a dangerous fallacy. In Paulinism the moral life is not the result of striving, but the fruit of faith; and this principle is the *differentia* of Christianity itself. Thus, in this section of the Epistle Paul insists that it is 'through the Spirit' and 'by faith' that we 'wait for the hope of righteousness' (v. 5), and that 'in Christ Jesus' the essential thing is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision but 'faith made operative through love' (cf. J. A. Robinson, *Ephesians*, 246), with the implication that the agency is that of God Himself. Again, if it is a question of not fulfilling 'the lust of the flesh' the requisite counsel is 'Walk by the Spirit' (v. 16), and the Christian virtues, 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control,' are all 'the fruit of the Spirit' (v. 22f.), while the crucifixion of the flesh, 'with the passions and lusts thereof,' is the mark of those 'that are of Christ Jesus' (v. 24).

All this does not mean that ethical results follow automatically, without choice or effort, otherwise there would be no point in the exhortation, 'If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk' (v. 25); but it is clear that when immediately he adds: 'Let us not be vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another' (v. 26), he is not commending a course of moral endeavour which a man can pursue of himself, if he has sufficient strength of purpose, but rather a willingness to let life in the Spirit, begotten by faith, express itself in social relationships. It is thus that we are to restore one overtaken in any trespass in a spirit of meekness, to bear one another's burdens 'and so fulfil the law of Christ' (vi. 2), and even to bear our own burden (vi. 5). To reap eternal life we are to sow unto the Spirit, and to 'work that which is good towards all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of

faith' (vi. 10). In sum, moral progress, as well as freedom and our standing with God, are rooted in faith in Christ, and remains baffled and inert without that faith. *Sola fide* is the hallmark of Pauline Christianity in morals, worship, and sacrament, always with the presumption that faith is never a mere human response, but is the work of God wrought in us by His grace.

The Spirit of the Age

Gal. i. 3, 4.—'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.'

In this sublime and suggestive passage St Paul defines the Christian redemption in terms of deliverance from the tyranny of the transient. 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil age.' 'Age' is, on the whole, a better translation than 'world' because it more directly suggests something that will pass. The words sound almost as if the Apostle were wrestling with something which is familiar to modern men under the title of the *Zeitgeist*, the time-spirit.

1. The dominion of the time-spirit is a real thing in any and every stage of human progress. Lord Morley has called it a great historical principle, that 'besides the prominent men of a generation there is something at work beneath, a moving current, on whose flood they are borne.' And if the prominent find it hard to get out of the current of their own age and steer an independent course, the pull upon smaller souls is proportionately mightier. Yet if the emancipation of a human soul is to be complete, it must include deliverance from this tyranny; it may even have to consist chiefly in this. Evil takes different forms in different ages: men are poorly equipped for their conflict if they have learned to wrestle merely with dead heresies and forgotten sins. Yet it is just this that is the difficulty: the time-spirit is so varied, so subtle, so elusive, so hard to analyse. It is an atmosphere which envelops men and soaks into them and becomes part of them, more intimately related to them than the air in their lungs or the blood in their veins.

It is one of the perplexities of history that the grip of the age even upon the more enlightened individual has often been so strong. The tales of lust and blood which disfigure the lives even of some of the heroes of Old Testament story are best accounted for by the spirit of the age: the personal and social conscience had not yet been educated to anything better. How could Robert Herrick preach sermons and write *Noble Numbers*, and yet produce much which, to use Sir Edmund Gosse's words, 'an English gentleman, not to say clergyman, had better have left unsaid'? The same critic accounts for it partly by the temperament of the man, but also partly by 'the false Anacreontic spirit of the day,' the spirit which made it fashionable to use the language of excess. But any man, searching for illustrations of the power of the *Zeitgeist*, will find many inside his own heart.

¶ 'Men,' says Shakespeare, 'are as the time is.' We all do what is done, fall into step with those around us, are swept along by the currents of fashion and custom and thought, however bravely we try to steer by the stars.

2. It goes without saying that much of the influence of the time-spirit is not only inevitable but beneficial. Good as well as evil has different developments in different ages, and He who is not the God of the dead but of the living would have His people alive to all His present leadings. One half of a man's duty towards his own age is to reverence it, understand it, and serve it. But the other half is not to be enslaved or blinded by it.

There could be no finer example than the character and work of great Paul himself. He was a man of his own age, a Jew of the Jews, a citizen of the Roman Empire, a typical product of a particular race and religion at a certain time. Yet he would have made small mark upon history, had there not been another side to him altogether—his fine independence of his age. He had this power from Christ. In the fellowship of Christ he found this liberty. In the words of Principal Forsyth: 'A positive, eternal creative Gospel for the spiritual conscience is what we need—not a set of true beliefs to contend with false, but the holy, living God of historic grace to keep us from the idols of the religious mind and the passing age.'

3. It is easier, perhaps, to state this in general than to apply it to the circumstances of a special age such as our own—an age is difficult to sum

up. Some observers of our age might tell us of its frivolity—its love of pleasure for its own sake, its neglect of the deeper and holier things. Other observers, perhaps equally truthful, might tell our generation about its gloom, the cynicism and pessimism even of some of our young people who, running everywhere in quest of happiness, have not found it; the sense of futility which cuts the nerve of unselfish effort.

¶ Walter Lippmann writes: 'The modern man finds it hard to believe that doing any one thing is better than doing any other thing, or, in fact, than doing nothing at all.' In a volume of essays which bears the significant title, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Jung, the psychologist, writes: 'About a third of my cases are suffering from no clinically definable neurosis, but from the senselessness and emptiness of their lives. It seems to me, however, that this can well be described as the general neurosis of our time.'

Another and perhaps as true a diagnosis as any might define our age as being, in and beneath these things, an age of egotism—an egotism ever thrusting and pushing, breaking all the commandments because heedless on the one hand of a neighbour's welfare as on the other of the Divine will. It is not a comfortable age to live in. There is written all over its restless life that men need deliverance from some of its most characteristic qualities. They need deliverance from themselves.

They are meant to find it. That is the very meaning of Revelation. Revelation lay in this, the coming of the Eternal into the midst of time, revealing the timeless truth and love, and supplying a pattern which time could not antiquate and a motive which time could not exhaust. This is the meaning of Jesus Christ, 'the same yesterday and to-day and for ever,' and of His Cross, which, erected but for the business of a cruel day, is still 'towering o'er the wrecks of time,' the supreme sign of God, the supreme hope of the world. It is this that is needed to correct the frivolity of our age and to teach it seriousness and sincerity. It is this that is no less needed to correct its glooms, and to bring into place of its cynicism and futilitarianism the peace and hope of redemption. It is this that alone can conquer the egotism of the age, and teach a thrusting and selfish world the law which is perfect liberty.

The Christian Leader

Gal. i. 15, 16.—'It was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles' (R.V.).

We know far more about St Paul than about any other leader of the primitive Church, indeed we might go further and say that we are more fully acquainted with his personality than with that of any other man of the ancient world, for he had the gift of self-disclosure. He is one of those rare beings whose temperament and character 'get across' through his writing, so that every line of his letters is stamped with his individuality.

¶ 'There is no man in ancient history,' writes W. M. Macgregor,[1] 'with the possible exception of Cicero, who can be known to the same extent. Some men's books are outworks, behind which they stubbornly withdraw themselves, but this man is vehemently present in all his writings, his individuality never deserts his words. He thrusts himself forward at every turn, and his own experiences are the burden of the message.'

1. Among the things which the Apostle has told us in his letters is included his estimate of his own place and status in the ranks of the Christian leaders. Though he asserts that he has worked 'more abundantly than they all,' and never for one moment ceased to maintain his call to be an Apostle, he describes himself as the 'least of the Apostles' and as 'unworthy to be called an Apostle,' because he had persecuted the Church.

History has confirmed the claim which St Paul made, but it has not confirmed his modest estimate of his relative importance. Seeing the effects which he produced by his labours and the abiding influence of his thought, it has hailed him as the most eminent of the original Christian leaders and as the one unquestionably great man in the Apostolic age of Christianity. For it was Paul who, by his stout fight against those who wished to impose the Jewish law on all Christians, set the Church upon its world-wide mission. He it was who saw clearly that the religion of Christ was really universal and preserved it from the danger of becoming a Jewish sect. It was he who began to think out

[1] *Christian Freedom*, 51.

the doctrines of the Person of Christ and the Atonement, and laid the foundations of a philosophy of history. All this would have been a shining achievement for one life-time, but Paul did much more. Throughout his career, after his conversion, he was tireless in missionary activity, constantly suffering persecution, caring for the needs and the failures of his scattered communities, and directing the forward movement of the gospel with wise strategy. We shall not easily find a man who has worked so creatively in so many fields or left so deep a mark upon subsequent centuries.

¶ Christians in the twentieth century can still bear as full witness to his power to bless as did Chrysostom in a far-off age. 'Paul by his letters still lives in the mouths of men, throughout the whole world; by them not only his converts, but all the faithful even to this day, yea, and all the saints who are yet unborn, until Christ's coming again, both have been and shall be blessed.'

St Paul was fitted for the time when he lived. The man and the circumstances were made for each other. He was himself fully convinced of this. It seemed plain to him that he had been raised up by the providence of God for the work into which he poured all the resources of his mind and spirit. God had 'separated him,' that is set him apart, from his mother's womb, and called him for the mission to the Gentiles. God had 'revealed His Son,' in him; not simply for his own benefit, but that he might preach Him among the Gentiles.

2. *What is the significance of great men in history?*—This question has been answered in divergent fashion by authorities. The type of historian represented by Thomas Carlyle exalts them to the foremost rank of importance, and conceives history as, in the main, the biographies of 'heroes.' To-day a very different notion of the place of 'great men' is current. According to the modern so-called 'scientific history,' outstanding persons are really of small importance. They originate nothing. They are the products and expressions of tendencies which they neither control nor direct. Perhaps they may be compared to lightning conductors, which bring the lightning to earth, but do not cause it, nor do they affect the storm.

We venture to think that neither of these views is correct, though each has grasped one side of the truth. It would obviously be absurd to write a history which paid no attention to the condition of the masses, or to their thoughts, needs, and hopes, and which took no account of economic causes and new inventions, concentrating the light wholly on a few outstanding individuals. But it would surely be no less absurd to deny that exceptional men have often played a decisive part. Many periods of history have been shaped, to some extent at least, by persons of outstanding power—for good or evil. Probably there would have been some kind of reformation of the Church in the sixteenth century in any case, but it would not have taken the form it did but for Luther. We may think that Germany was bound to have a violent change in the 1930's, but would it have plunged the world into war if Hitler had not emerged?

A distinction can be drawn between two classes of men who have profoundly affected the course of history—'men of destiny' and 'men of Providence.' Many of the 'great' men in history have felt that they were marked out by God, or Providence, or Fate for the rôle they had to play. St Paul believed that he had been 'separated from his mother's womb'; Napoleon thought that he was the 'man of destiny.' It appears that frequently, in the providence of God, the leader who is fitted to deal with a situation appears just when the time is ripe. But he is a free moral agent and not a puppet. In principle the choice is always between the same alternatives. He may use his power to further the purpose of God, as he is able to discern it; he may seek for insight and self-devotion sufficient for his appointed task. In that case, though he may make many mistakes and end in apparent failure, he will have been a man of Providence, used by God in His grand design. Equally easily—nay, how much more easily—he may become intoxicated by the power which has come into his hands, or he may lose the ideals which he once had in the stress of conflict. He remains a man of destiny, but he has made the great refusal, for he has lost the opportunity of becoming the man of God's providence.

Among the honours which we pay to the Apostle Paul not the least is the praise that he is pre-eminently an example of a great man who never lost his soul. The call that he had received was never forgotten and never ceased to be the guiding principle of his life. We must pray that, in every department of our national

life in these days of decision, those born for the time and fitted for the occasion may be given the opportunity to lead. Above all we must pray that they will be men of Providence, as well as men of destiny, having insight and courage to show us our true path.

God send us men! God send us men!
Patient, courageous, strong, and true,
With vision clear and mind equipped,
His will to learn, His work to do.

In the Church also we need leaders after the pattern of St Paul. That the Church has not collapsed, that it goes on—a little weaker, perhaps, but not perceptibly changed—is this the chief fruit of leadership? Paul did not think so. He was always ready to take risks for Christ and he conceived his mission in very different terms from those of preservation and 'keeping things going.' While he was at the head he forced the Church—and the 'churches'—to 'live dangerously' like himself, to go out to meet new conditions and new thoughts instead of warding them off as long as possible. We cannot demand of our Christian leaders that they should have the mind and personality of a Paul, but we will pray for them that they may have a touch of his spirit.

3. As we know to our sorrow, there has been in our time one man who claimed for himself the title of the Leader, der Führer, and who had his claim adopted enthusiastically by millions. One competent observer of his great gatherings compared him to a sponge which soaks up the water in which it is immersed; so he, as it were, soaked up the emotions of the crowd and, by expressing them, heightened their tension. In Miss Buller's illuminating book, *Darkness over Germany*, she points out that he responded to and appealed to the lower and less rational impulses of the mass—that was their tragedy and ours.

Does not this throw some light on the mystery of leadership? If the people depend on the leader, *the leader in turn has some dependence on the people*. Even the most potent of creative persons must appeal to something in the souls of those whom he would lead or he will have no followers. One of the glories of Paul's career is that he never appealed to any motive that was not noble and good. Remember that he had some queer persons to deal with. Unpleasant crises were constantly occurring and it was always hard to hold his motley army of undisciplined soldiers of Christ together. The tempting and easy course would have been to tide over a difficulty now and then by a little accommodation, by an appeal, for example, to self-interest or to pride. But he never did.

This is indeed a high tribute to the Apostle who comes before us in the light of the truly faithful leader, but is it not also a tribute to the congregation of slaves, freedmen, small tradesmen, and artisans, only recently converted from paganism, whom he led in so masterful a fashion? The nameless Christians of Thessalonica, Corinth, Philippi, and a dozen other places are part of the epic of St Paul.

To follow is the vocation of all Christians. The great Apostle was a providential leader because he was a whole-hearted follower of Christ. That was the secret of his leadership and it is the secret of all truly Christian leadership. The great man is kept sane and humble, because he, too, is a servant and a follower; the men and women who respond to his call are free persons and not slavish robots, because they are bound together with the leader in one fellowship of service to one Lord.

So may it be with all of us. In Church and nation may there be raised up leaders who can speak to our noblest impulses and call out our highest loyalties, and may we be worthy of such leadership, swift to answer the call to serve.[1]

A Great Belief and a Great Experience

Gal. i. 15, 16.—'It was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles' (R.V.).

THESE words refer to the stupendous event that happened to the Apostle as he travelled to Damascus. Whenever St Paul rehearses his own spiritual history he always starts *there*. That never-to-be-forgotten day when the light which was brighter than the noonday sun shone about him was his spiritual birthday. And this is what happened on that tremendous day: 'It was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal his Son in me.'

The Apostle is here speaking of something

[1] W. R. Matthews, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 100.

that happened to himself—of a great and revolutionizing inward experience. 'It pleased God to reveal his Son *within* me.' It was something which happened within the region of his own soul. There was a real objective appearance of the Risen Christ to Paul—as really objective as any appearance vouchsafed to those who were apostles before him. But this objective appearance was accompanied or immediately followed by an inner experience. When he saw Christ and heard Him speak, the truth about Christ's person was flashed into his soul on the instant. He knew that the Person against whom he had so furiously raged was none other than the Son of God. The implications of that objective revelation disclosed themselves only gradually; but as Paul meditated on the life and death of Jesus, whom he now knew to be the Son of God, the meaning of His death began to break upon his soul. He saw it as the great sacrifice for sin; he found for himself the rest and release he had sought in vain in the Jewish law; in his own heart and conscience he felt Christ's healing and redeeming power. The historical Christ became a Christ felt, known, and personally appropriated. The Christ revealed to him by an outward act became a Christ known and loved by an inward experience.

It was as the result of this double experience that St Paul became a Christian preacher. Perhaps we ought rather to speak of it as one great experience in two stages—first intellectual apprehension and then personal experience; first Christ recognized for whom He was, and, secondly, Christ felt as a power. The first is incomplete without the second; the second is impossible without the first. It was the combination of the two that made Paul the preacher he became. Here in this double experience we get the secret of his immense and untiring missionary zeal.

Let us look, then, at the great creed and the great experience which were the secrets of St Paul's evangelical passion. They remain the abiding and the only sufficient motives to missionary zeal.

1. First of all, back of St Paul's tireless labours, prompting them and inspiring them, there lay *a great and mighty belief*. Paul believed that Christ was the only Son of the everlasting God. That was the revelation given to him on the way to Damascus. In the light of that revelation he re-read the historic life, and especially the historic death. That death became something unique, solitary, unparalleled! For it was the willing sacrifice of the Son of God! Paul found in it the one sufficient sacrifice for sin, of which all other sacrifices were but types and shadows. In it he saw God dealing with sin—judging it, bearing it, delivering men from it. The Cross was not simply something suffered, it was something achieved and done. In it God accomplished the exodus, and by His own mighty act delivered the world from sin's bondage and power.

That creed made Paul a preacher. It gave him his message, his *word* to the nations. And it was not only the Apostle's word, it was the Church's word too. 'Whether it be I or they,' he says, 'so we preached and so ye believed.' It was indeed this message that made the Church. For we must always remember that it was not the Church that made the Gospel, but the Gospel that made the Church. The revelation of the Son of God to men at one and the same time created the Church and gave it its Gospel, a Gospel so mighty that it fired its preachers with a quenchless passion for proclaiming it. Back of all Paul's measureless labours, back of all the efforts of the primitive Church, making it the aggressive and victorious Church it was, was this great faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

And nothing but the same great creed will make the Church an aggressive, missionary, evangelistic Church to-day. The Church exists to proclaim certain action on the part of God; that is its *kerygma*, its message. That central message constitutes its dogma, its essential and indispensable creed. It is not something that the Church holds; it is something that holds the Church. And that essential and indispensable creed is the same to-day as in apostolic times—the belief that God was in Christ.

It was that mighty belief that made Paul a preacher and a missionary. It is that mighty belief that has inspired the pioneers and missionaries and martyrs of all the succeeding centuries. It is that mighty belief that inspires the prayers and the generosity of the thousands and tens of thousands who carry the world on their heart to-day. From it has sprung the heroism and devotion and sacrifice of the mission field. On it every missionary society depends for its very life. 'Who is he that overcometh

the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' On any lesser belief than that missionary effort becomes a superfluity, an impertinence. Behind any world-evangelism, justifying it and inspiring it, there must be the great belief that Jesus is the Son of God.

2. But there was a second thing that made Paul a missionary. Back of the Apostle's tireless evangelistic labours there lay not only a great belief, but also *a great personal experience.* The Son of God was not simply revealed *to* him, He was also revealed *in* him. That is to say, Paul knew Christ to be the Son of God not only by seeing Him risen and glorified; he knew Him to be the Son of God because He did God's forgiving and saving work in his own heart and life. Especially God's saving and forgiving work. Paul strove with all the energy of his strong and vehement nature after the righteousness which is of the Law. But the more he tried, the more calamitously he seemed to fail; so that he was a complete stranger to rest of heart and peace. And then Christ came and did for him what the Law could not do. He loosed him from his sins; He delivered him from all his fears; He set him right with God; He gave him the spirit of sonship; so that through believing in Christ he became the possessor of joy and peace. 'It pleased God to reveal his Son *in me.*' Paul has but little to say of Christ after the flesh. He has a great deal to say about the Christ who lived and worked in his own soul. He went from one end of the world to the other preaching a forgiving and saving Christ. It was the Christ he himself had experienced.

¶ It is the personal experience of Christ that makes the preacher and the missionary. It was so with Luther. The correct intellectual creed was his from the beginning, or, at any rate, from the beginning of his monastic days. In the words of the old creed he expressed belief in Jesus Christ God's only Son our Lord. But he might have remained a monk to the end of his days had he never got any further than that. But one day it pleased God to reveal His Son *in* him. It was that personal experience of Christ's saving grace that fired Luther's soul and touched his lips, and turned the monk into a prophet, and gave him such a mighty Gospel that it liberated and regenerated half Europe.

3. Following upon the great belief made vital by the great experience, there will come *great preaching.* 'It was the good pleasure of God,' says the Apostle, 'to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles.' The revelation was in order to the preaching and the preaching was dependent upon the revelation. The one was the condition of the other. The fact is, it takes a forgiven man to preach adequately about forgiveness; it takes a saved man to preach worthily of a Saviour; it takes a man whose heart is filled with the love of God to preach about the love which passeth knowledge. The one indispensable qualification for the preacher is not eloquence or learning, or even theological orthodoxy—these things are good and they increase the efficiency of the preacher; but the one indispensable thing which a man must have before he can be a preacher at all is this personal experience of the redeeming Son of God in his own soul.

¶ The words of St Paul, which have always been very great ones in my mind, have seemed more than ever full of meaning at times this week: 'When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.' It seems to me that until God reveals His Son in us, we cannot preach Him so that people shall really feel we are speaking to them of that which concerns them, and which they want to hear. The Gospel is 'Christ is with you, and in you, and He is in me.' I cannot live except it were so, nor can you. I can live because it is so; and you can do the same. But the preaching of Christ out of a book, as if He whom we read of in the Gospels was not actually our Lord, the Lord of our spirits, is very poor work. Let the phrases which describe Him be as Evangelical or as Catholic as they may, the hungry sheep look up and are not fed; there is no real approach made to the centre and citadel of men's hearts.[1]

The modern missionary enterprise is the product of the Evangelical revival. Hearts which—like that of John Wesley—had been strangely warmed by a personal experience of Christ's saving grace were all aflame to tell the world about Him. Those are the only people who will ever be enthusiastic about missions. Missions are the final test of a vital religion, of a real personal experience of Christ. People whose interests in Christ are merely intellectual or

[1] *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice,* i. 509.

sentimental, who have never known in themselves how amazing a thing forgiveness is, how wonderful a thing salvation is, will at best take but a languid interest in missions. But the Word will be like a fire in the bones of the forgiven and redeemed man.

'I should have painted Him much better if I had loved Him more,' Doré is reported to have said about a picture of the Christ. And we should all serve Him better, and sacrifice more freely for Him, if we loved Him more, and *love* springs in turn from inward and personal experience of His grace and power. That is our need. Let us pray for it. 'Warm our coldness we implore.' Such a renewal of vital religion would dispel our difficulties. It would give us enthusiasm, passion, power. When it is the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in us, we shall be eager to preach Him among the Gentiles.

St Paul after his Conversion

Gal. i. 15–18, ii. 1, 2, 6.—'But when it was the good pleasure of God, . . . to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; . . . Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. . . . Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem . . . and I laid before them the gospel which I preached among the Gentiles, . . . But . . . they . . . who were of repute imparted nothing to me' (R.V.).

When the vision outside Damascus had passed away, the one thing essential for St Paul must have been time to reflect. As at first with his bodily eyes he could not see for the glory of that light, so neither inwardly could he at once comprehend. In part, no doubt, he saw and understood. There were glories of certainty that gripped his mind and soul. But the bewilderment caused by the flood of new ideas must have been extreme. Naturally, inevitably, he did not confer with flesh and blood. Nor did he go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before him. What he needed was seclusion for the purpose of deep reflection and communion with God. Away in some solitude of Arabia he must accustom the eyes of his spirit to the glory of this new religious light.

1. It is certainly difficult to exaggerate the revolution in St Paul's ideas which the Damascus vision created.

(1) First and foremost, there was the fact that Jesus was alive. We cannot too strongly emphasize that it was Jesus Himself, and none other, the Jesus who had been crucified, who appeared to Paul in the way. So came the great discovery that Jesus was alive. Then His followers had been right after all! Then the faith on which they had staked their lives was really true! Then Stephen's dying declaration that he saw Jesus on the right hand of God had been, not blasphemy, but sober, literal fact! Then all that those persecuted men and women had said about having their Leader with them still, about holding daily intimate communion with Him, had been no fabricated, preposterous story, as it had seemed, but strictly accurate and genuine! It was a staggering discovery.

¶ Chesterton in one place, speaking of Plato and Shakespeare, begs us to 'imagine what it would be to live with such men still living, to know that Plato might break out with an original lecture to-morrow, or that at any moment Shakespeare might shatter everything with a single song.' Paul needed no such imagination where Jesus was concerned. At any moment Jesus might break out with a new self-revelation, or shatter Judaism and heathenism alike with the new song of salvation.[1]

(2) In the second place, St Paul was compelled to acknowledge that Jesus, incredible as it had seemed, was indeed the Messiah. That from which the Pharisee recoiled, that which contemporary thought abhorred, was nevertheless the truth. The Almighty Himself had demonstrated this by the exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth and His enthronement in the heavens. This was the Lord's doing, however marvellous it might be in Jewish eyes. But this identification of Jesus with the Christ required Paul to change his whole conception about the Christ. Hitherto his Messianic ideal, like that of his contemporaries, had demanded political liberation, national supremacy, and visible establishment of a kingdom of glory in Jerusalem. In the new light of this heavenly vision, how poor, how contemptible the former ideals must have seemed! For these half-materialized notions he must now substitute the spiritual ideal of the Christ as heavenly and glorified. This new conception of the Christ came upon Paul with refining and spiritualizing power. It uplifted his whole religion. It appealed, no doubt, to

[1] J. S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ*, 134.

all that was best in him. But it was nothing less than a religious revolution when he came to understand that Jesus—the rejected, the crucified, the apparently cursed and abhorred of God as well as man—was nevertheless God's chosen, God's exalted, God's Christ.

(3) A third inquiry held the Apostle's mind. What is the meaning of Jesus' death? Till now, Saul thought it a Divine retribution on a blasphemous claim—God's refutation of the daring assertions of the Nazarene. But the vision of Jesus in glory swept these misconstructions away. Paul must find a new interpretation. Jesus was not to be accepted as the Christ in spite of His death, on the ground that He rose. The death could be no mere difficulty tolerated for the Resurrection's sake, and then to be ignored and buried in oblivion as soon as possible. No; the death itself must have its own intrinsic worth. This death was the death of God's Christ. An accident therefore it could not be. A mere victory of worldly force over religious excellence—that was hopelessly inadequate, simply because it left God out. The splendour of God's approval was flung back upon that Cross. It must have been God's will. Jesus had not been driven to it helplessly, broken and defeated: He had accepted it in the freedom of His own unconquered soul. Along the line of the Cross lay the world's redemption. Calvary was in the Divine plan for mending a broken earth.

Such was Paul's experience. That his thoughts developed is doubtless true. In his later letters they received matured expression. The essential is not how far his inferences extended, but rather whence they were derived. Yet substantially his gospel was now complete.

2. Now the time came when St Paul and the elder Apostles met. Three years after his conversion the Apostle went up to Jerusalem and spent a fortnight with St Peter; as recipients of widely different experiences, it was clearly the time to compare their conclusions.

(1) It is startling at first to find that St Paul, in retrospect, was able to say of the elder Apostles, that 'they imparted to him nothing.' He cannot possibly mean that the Twelve added nothing to his knowledge of the Redeemer's life. Assuredly, in a sense, they must have taught him much. It is morally certain that the words and works of Jesus were not excluded from conversation during those fifteen days which Paul spent with Peter in Jerusalem. The one must have been eager to impart, the other to hear, something of the days of the Son of Man. This is not mere imagination. It is certain. For afterwards Paul displays a knowledge of the earthly ministry which he can have derived only from those who were believers before him. The Apostle's ignorance of the historical Jesus has been in some directions a popular assertion. The assertion has done good. For it has resulted in more careful research and convincing proof that he knew far more of the detailed incidents than his critics had supposed. He knew of our Lord's Davidic origin, and of His baptism. The command to baptzie, he not only knew, but obeyed. He knew that our Lord proclaimed the Kingdom of God, and shows that this great conception had powerfully impressed him. He knew of 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ'; of His teaching on marriage; of His distinct command for the maintenance of the Church's ministry; of the night in which He was betrayed; of the impression which His character made upon men.

¶ 'Principal John Baillie[1] has suggestively remarked that what we have in the great description of the nature of love in 1 Corinthians 13: "Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade. Love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient"—is not so much a philosopher discoursing on an abstract virtue as a Christian saint meditating on the character of Jesus. "Can we have any doubt who it was who sat in the studio of Paul's imagination for that famous little vignette of the ideal man?"'

Indeed, it has been truly said, 'There is a vast amount of undeveloped biographical material in the background of St Paul's thought.' 'He obviously took pains,' says another, 'to learn the utterances of Jesus on all important questions. When he had not this to go upon, he says so openly.' Now, for all these details Paul was indebted to human instruction, to the tradition of men who were believers before him.

(2) And yet he could say in a deeper sense that the elder Apostles imparted to him nothing. For they could add no fundamental principle,

[1] *The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity*, 81.

no doctrine of salvation which he did not already grasp and hold as firmly as themselves. His essential Christianity was not their gift to him, nor was it received from any human tradition. 'I neither received it from men, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.' It was immediate, personal, direct. It was the outcome of his own experience. But to say that the senior Apostles in conference added nothing to him is to say that in fundamental principles they were agreed.

3. This fundamental agreement between St Peter and St Paul is profoundly important in more directions than one.

(1) In its evidential bearing on the truth of Christianity. Some critics have expressed a wish that Paul had exhibited less confidence in the validity of his spiritual intuitions and a greater interest in historic detail. It would have been better, they say, if after his conversion he had conferred with flesh and blood, and got the older Apostles to give him exact information. But had Paul complied with these conditions he would have destroyed precisely that which gives him his significance. What he did was to mature his thoughts alone, and then to compare his independent conclusions with those of the Twelve. And the whole point is that their conclusions and his agreed. The validity of his spiritual intuitions was acknowledged by the men who possessed the exact detailed information. 'Paul's doctrine of the nature of Christ,' says Weizsäcker, 'was not afterwards, so far as we know, attacked or disputed.' This unity is of the deepest importance. St Peter and St Paul represent two methods of approaching truth. The one had reached his conclusions through the details of the earthly life; the other from the heavenly glory reflected back upon the death. If their methods differed their conclusions agreed; and Paul knew that he had the solid weight of a united Christendom behind him when he wrote, 'So, then, whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.'

¶ Fifty years ago a clear contrast between Paul and the creed of the Primitive Church was almost a dogma of critical orthodoxy. All that is changed now. We have learned that the *kerygma* which he preached did not differ essentially from that of the earliest apostolic preachers. To be sure, it fell to Paul to explore the fact of Christ in ways that never came within the horizon of the original Jerusalem apostles; but there is no record that they ever disagreed on the question of Christology. If Paul called Jesus Lord and set Him on the Divine side of reality, so did they. If Paul acknowledged Jesus' name to be the only saving name under heaven and knew that one day he must stand before Him as Judge, so did those who were 'in Christ' before him.[1]

(2) Then, secondly, if the senior Apostles added nothing to the Gospel of St Paul, this fact determines what is the essence of Christianity. For, if Christianity had consisted in repetition of the teaching of Jesus, then the elder Apostles must have treated Paul as Apollos had to be treated. They must have taken him unto them 'and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully.' In which case he would have been constrained to say that, instead of imparting nothing unto him, they had imparted to him almost everything. And then to assert his independence of other men's instructions would have been impossible. He could never have made the claim about his Gospel, 'I neither received it from man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.' That the elder Apostles imparted nothing to his Gospel means that Christianity does not consist in the details of Christ's career. Men sometimes say reproachfully that 'hardly anything remains in Paul of the actual Jesus whose charm had attracted peaceful Galilee; or that such inquiries as: Where was He born, how long did He live, what did He preach, find no answer in Paul.' Perfectly true. But this only shows that Paul's conception of the essence of Christianity was not that accepted by some of his modern critics. Christianity was to him the religion of redemption. It was inseparable from a definite Christology. He could determine therefore not to know anything among his hearers, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified; and this, not because he was afflicted with a weak sense of historical reality, but because he had a strong sense of relative value and religious proportion.

(3) And, finally, while St Paul and St Peter were essentially agreed, they differed greatly in their insight into the truth. Peter required a special vision, and a warning not to call that common which God had cleansed, before he grasped the universality of the Christian religion.

[1] A. M. Hunter.

But to Paul this mighty principle was self-evident, the most obvious thing in the world. Peter's relative slowness to understand, with all the facts before him, may be partly due to differences in personal gifts, but it is also due to the differences in experience. The multiplicity of apparently conflicting elements in the life of Jesus Christ must have made accurate interpretation exceedingly hard, even for men of remarkable spiritual power. But it was given to the Apostle to concentrate his whole absorbed attention on one central point, undisturbed, undistracted by multiplicity of detail. He saw the death in the heavenly glory of the exaltation. And in that, read, understood, saw with a rapidity and a fulness perhaps impossible to men who stood in bewildering closeness to the complex incidents of the earthly career. Just in proportion as those incidents receded into the past, matured reflection enabled the Galilean Apostles also to see profoundly as Paul had seen. Thus, if in their rate of insight they might differ, in their Gospel they were at one.

The Lord's Brother

Gal. i. 19.—'But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.'

THE writer is a missionary, addressing a pastoral letter to a group of his converts. It happens to be important that he should remind them of certain events in his own life which have a bearing upon their estimate of the value of his spiritual message. So recollecting, so recording, he mentions a visit which he had once paid to Jerusalem, some three years or a little more after a supreme crisis in his spiritual history. In the holy city he had stayed for about a fortnight, as the guest of Peter, with whom it had been his purpose to converse. As it happened, the other members of Peter's circle, John, Andrew, Philip, and the rest, did not cross his path. One person only besides Peter of the nearer disciples of Jesus of Nazareth did he meet; and this was James, the Lord's brother. That is all; the matter at once passes off. With a warm asseveration of the truth of his statement that of the inner circle he saw no one else during that fortnight, the writer, to wit, Paul of Tarsus, goes on at once to other and more extended recollections.

1. Here is a plain elementary item of recollection, in itself altogether prosaic, like a memorandum from a diary. The light falls dry and clear around it—as little a glamour of romance, as little a luminous haze of myth, as if the writer were alluding to an interview with Timothy, or with Sergius Paulus, or with Gallio. Yet think what that datum of memory connoted and involved. This man of the active life and busy pen had once been in personal company with one who was familiarly known to be the brother of the Nazarene. No matter for our purpose what the brotherhood precisely was; it meant this at least—that James had once shared the same home with Jesus, and Jesus with James; that the neighbours knew them as kinsmen, partners alike in the life of hearth, and field, and street, and synagogue, sons of one Galilean home.

An ample answer lies within this brief phrase to the theory that to St Paul the Galilean life of the Lord was unimportant, and very possibly unknown. It was not so to the man who carried in his soul the converting voice from heaven, 'I am Jesus *of Nazareth*, whom thou persecutest.' It was not so to the intimate of St Luke. Nor was it so to the man who records with such quiet and matter-of-fact precision his fortnight's visit at Jerusalem to Peter, 'pilot of the Galilean Lake,' and his interview with James, the Lord's brother. Paul was sent indeed to be, not the biographer of Jesus Christ, but the Apostle of the mystery of His cross and resurrection. But full and vivid all the while lay in his soul, behind the message of the Christ in His everlastingness, that life of Jesus which stands with His sacrifice in indissoluble mutual relation.

We are carried then by this passage, at one step, straight into the very midst of the very first generation of believers. And we find Jesus there, and His Galilean home, in all the certainty of familiar and unanxious allusion. We read a writer who speaks to us from this living page with the immortal presentness of the mind, and who could easily, if he had wished it—and very probably he did—have catechized the brother of the Lord about the face and voice of Jesus, about the normal incidents of the working life at Nazareth, about the whole human exterior of those days of the flesh of the Son of man.

2. But, then, here is the great paradox, here is the other side: 'I saw James, the Lord's

brother.' 'The Lord'—what does it mean? He has just named Peter very simply, and now names James, and will soon name John. Why this reverential designation for the teacher of Peter and the brother of James—'the Lord'? The answer lies in abundance, and close at hand, in this same letter. Look just above upon the page, and read: 'It pleased God to reveal his Son in me.' Take sentence after sentence, still from these Galatian paragraphs: 'Paul, an apostle, not by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead.' 'Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.' 'Christ liveth in me; I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

To Paul this wonderful Being, practically upon the one hand his own contemporary in human life, and the familiar sharer in its domestic relationships, was on the other hand, Lord, Redeemer, Giver of grace, Object of saving faith; at once upholder of the universe and inhabitant of the heart. Once known, He proves to be All in all for the personality which has found Him. Into Him a Paul, with all his magnificent wealth of mind and will, rejoices to be, as it were, submerged. 'I live, yet not I; Christ liveth in me.' He is not, indeed, called God in set terms to the Galatians. But either James's Brother is also God made man, or the language about Him used here is high treason against the Eternal. For it makes out the Brother of James to be man's absolute possessor, man's secret of eternal life, his ultimate and adequate hope and rest, his all-satisfying joy and glory.

¶ Where in the history of mankind, asks Harnack, can we find 'any similar instance of men eating and drinking with their Master, seeing Him in the characteristic aspects of His humanity, and then proclaiming Him not only as the great prophet and revealer of God, but as the divine disposer of history, as the beginning of God's creation, and as the inner strength of a new life?' He adds, 'It was not thus that Muhammad's disciples spoke of their prophet.'

3. Upon this phenomenon of the Galatian Epistle some reflections arise that are helpful to faith in its struggles and in its work.

(1) In the first place, the convictions denoted respectively by the words 'James, the Lord's brother,' and by such terms as 'the Son of God,' are held together in the mind of the Apostle obviously without an effort. From his conversion onwards, whatever his other internal conflicts were—and they were assuredly severe and many—there was none upon this point. Jesus of Nazareth was, by the transfigured Pharisee, from the first to the last, recognized, accepted, adored, served, with a love and reverence which always kindled each other into new ardour, as the eternal Son of the Blessed. To hold this, or rather to be held by it, means for him, not effort, but repose. So far from disturbing either his moral or his mental equilibrium, it is precisely this around which his whole deep and energetic nature moves with all its powers, like a planetary system, rolled around its sun. Before and after Damascus Paul was the same man, but the same with a vast difference. Before, he was a force intense and burning, but dangerous, because internal harmony was lacking. After, he was more than ever intense and burning, and he put out his great energies in a way which will be felt as long as there is a Christendom on earth. But the force was now pure, salutary, altogether beneficent. The man was as sane as he was inspired.

¶ We find in St Paul the exact antithesis of the religious fanatic. For fanaticism is essentially harsh and narrow. It grasps, ordinarily, one great truth, or more likely one fragment of one great truth, and distorts it into an error—perhaps a deadly error—by treating it as all in all. It does not suffer long, nor is it kind, nor does it hope all things, nor endure them. Its tendency in general is to dominate rather than to serve.

(2) In the second place, this noble sanity of the man, who was sure meanwhile that he was Divinely illuminated and inspired, is a moral evidence, as sober as it is profound, to the quality of *fact* inherent in the creed which was his life. We dare to say that, if the belief that James's Brother was the Eternal Being incarnate had not been sacred fact, it would have been a monster of the mind and the tyrant of it, ruinous to reason, to virtue, to justice, to love. Its holders and followers would have developed, like the Zwickau prophets of Luther's time, into visionaries, imbecile or dangerous. They could never possibly have organized the new Christendom on lines of peace, and helpfulness, and

virtue ; they could not have written the supreme eulogy of self-forgetting love.

The primitive Christian spirit, equally exalted and wise, showed that the believers had seen and touched reality. Nothing but the *fact*, concrete and eternal, of the incarnate Christ of God explains the whole character of an Apostle. That which could produce side by side, in a profound harmony as of musical parts, the absolute assurance of a heavenly vision and the perfection of elevated moral maturity must be nothing less than the central truth of things.

But was it so indeed ? Then, past question, the Lord is alive to-day and evermore. That immeasurable wonder—veiled to us in its immensity by its own greatness and by our familiarity with the traditional confession of it—Incarnate God sacrificed, risen, and reigning, is immeasurable reality. Behold Him once again ! He passes by us in His grace and in His glory. He is man, our Elder Brother, in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin ; so that to His perfect sympathy is for ever joined that omnipotence to help which, without moral perfectness, could not be. And also He is the Lord, King of Glory, everlasting Son, the sinner's pardon, the believer's life, and purity, and power, and final hope.

¶ What Jesus once was, He is eternally. He comes to us, not only in His temple, or in the room when the door is shut, but as He came to Mary and Martha in the midst of household tasks, and as He came to Peter mending his nets and doing his daily work ; and He comes with the same offer, the offer of His transforming friendship. There are no conditions save the imaginative faith to believe that He is, and that fellowship with Him is possible. It is an amazing offer. It means that no single experience of life has ever to be faced alone.[1]

Our Highest Ministry

Gal. i. 24.—' And they glorified God in me.'

It is often said that the highest service we can render our race is to raise its conception of itself. Far beyond any intellectual or material wealth that gifted men create is the fact that they set in fuller light the essential greatness of human nature. Unhappily, too, many so live as to dwarf our conception of ourselves ; so we are all the more ready to reverence ' the immortal few ' who in any wise vindicate our superior claim, and quicken our sense of potential greatness.

Yet, valuable as this service may be, there is open to us a higher, for by the teaching of the text we may so live as to magnify God in the thought of men ; we may cause Him to appear more real, more near and beautiful, more worthy of the love and obedience of His children. By such a ministry we exalt our race in the highest degree.

Let us, then, consider two things—the possibility of this high ministry and how it may be accomplished.

1. *The possibility of this high ministry.*—Many passages in the Old Testament show how the unfaithful Israelites degraded the conception of Jehovah in the estimate of the heathen. In the Epistle to the Romans St Paul makes a point of this. ' For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written.' The Christian world of to-day shares in this condemnation. In strange lands our countrymen too often dishonour the great name by which they are called. And in the homeland it is much the same. By greed, by sensual indulgence, by practical atheism in character and conduct, we destroy the faith of men in God and strengthen their prejudices against His Kingdom. This is an awful side to the sin of those who bear Christ's name and deny His spirit. On the other hand, it is possible that we may so live as to manifest God's glory and magnify His name. We may bring the unbelieving into the presence of God, impress them powerfully with the sense of His holiness and love, convince them that with Him they have to do ; so interpret Him to their understanding, conscience, and heart that they become moved to His fear and service.

Mark here that *St Paul does not glorify himself* —a temptation to which all are exposed, and to which so many fall victims. A writer, in describing the inordinate vanity of Nietzsche, says : ' In other words, since he could not bow before God, he bowed before himself. His self-glorification eventually degenerated into that megalomania which reached its highest pitch at the moment of his mental catastrophe. He succumbed to the danger which invariably accompanies every morality in one's own name

[1] Leslie D. Weatherhead.

—the danger of self-glorification.' His self-esteem grew step by step until he thought himself the greatest of mankind, and finished life in an asylum. How far Paul is from all this! The spirit of reverence and adoration breathes in every line he writes, giving all glory to God. His humility grows with the years, grows in proportion to his unique authority, and becomes more profound as the work he achieved increases in vastness and magnificence. 'To the praise of the glory of his grace' is the doxology that rings in every epistle.

Neither did the churches of Judæa glorify St Paul. 'They glorified God in me.' One of the biggest truths lies at the bottom of hero-worship; yet, misunderstood or misdirected, such worship occasions a fatal blindness and paralysis. In the *Memoirs* of Frederick Perthes it is related how he felt the necessity of a human and personal medium if he was to abide in the love of God. He then expected that through his devout wife he would reach the essence of life. He wrote her: 'Through the love of thee I shall rise higher and draw nearer to Him, in whom I find I cannot participate without some medium.' Again: 'To us, in our life here below, the love of the creature is given to educate us for the love of God.' But eventually Perthes became conscious that the love of God is not a spontaneous development of human love, and that the adored may become a snare and stultification. It is a special privilege to live in contact with rare goodness, to enjoy the intimacy of Christ-like men and women; yet the presence and appreciation of high character does not necessarily develop into a personal love of God, any more than a passion for Nature necessarily leads to reverence of the Creator.

¶ It was said of Leslie Stephen that the mystical element which in the majority of men finds expression in religion was exhausted by him in adoration of the mountains.

Our Lord is the 'one Mediator' between God and men. He, and He alone, interprets and inspires the love of God. 'They saw no man, save Jesus only.' Admiration of a saintly life tends toward the crowning admiration and reverence in the love of God, but to linger with the saint is to cheat ourselves with a false dawn. The sooner we lift our eyes from the satellite to the sun the better. The disciple has done his grandest work as he points us to Christ, brings us to Christ.

'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.' Here is the confession and the calling of the Christian Church. It is the duty of every member of it, disclaiming the least shadow of personal merit, to awaken the consciousness of man to the tremendous fact that God is; that whilst He is inflexibly just He is compassionate, rich in mercy, waiting to be gracious to all who call upon His name. To recognize Him is the missing secret that will transform a deranged world. Our Lord lived and died that He might bring us to God, that He 'might bring many sons unto glory,' and He graciously allows us to share in His reconciling work. Can we have a higher vocation?

2. *How this ministry may be accomplished.*—In three obvious ways the Apostle so made God known that the people glorified Him.

(1) By his *testimony*—St Paul seized every opportunity to make his personal confession. He was always ready to tell of the converting grace that had made of him a new creation; of the sanctifying grace that was ever working the purification of his whole being; of the sustaining grace that enabled him to endure infinite trial. Thus ought every believer faithfully to testify to the fact and power of the salvation he has proved. We must be watchful for every opening to declare what religion has been to us, what it is to us.

¶ Taine insists that it is a duty of citizens to magnify the truths of patriotism. 'We owe something to our nation, our time, and our race, from a strict sense of probity; we have received a very great deal; there is not one true, humane, or just idea which has not cost the men who acquired it for us a whole ransom of labour and trials. Everything that we esteem in our own thought and feelings comes from others, and it is only right that we should repay to those who will come after us a little of what we owe to the dead. That is why any one who thinks at all should work out his thoughts so as to make them public and useful.'

(2) By his *character*.—Himself a 'living epistle, known and read of all men,' his confession touched and moved all whom it reached. Our profession persuades, just as it is backed up by deeds of righteousness and love. Only a real shining goodness will prevail against the indifference of our day and generation. When

the world is arrested by such works and graces it does not glorify the individual by whom they are wrought, but Him who has transfigured such unpromising material. And we must watch against whatever would detract from the force of our Christian sincerity. We may do right things in an unfortunate manner, and make our good gifts an offence. Against such defects of behaviour we must be on our guard. Here is our calling, that we may truly say with Paul, 'My example was the cause of their glorifying God.'

¶ During Passchendæle in the first World War, when many hearts were heavy with sorrow and many hearts heavy with foreboding, some one thought it would be helpful to expose to the city of Glasgow the great affirmations of Scripture—'God so loved the world'; 'Let not your hearts be troubled,' and so on. A parade of sandwich-boardmen tramped through the city. An old Highland minister saw them marching. Unfortunately they had been compelled to bring out the old, the lame, and the blind. 'I could not see the mighty words of the gospel,' he said, 'for looking at the wretched sandwich-boardmen who carried them.' [1]

(3) By his *service*.—He who once persecuted the Church of God now sought with unwearied zeal and sacrifice to build it up, and the sight of this moved the spectator to believe in the Divine love and power which made the spectacle possible. All disinterested work for our generation, work involving renunciation and sacrifice, is a fresh revelation to the world of that Divine love which prompts such work, and most powerfully appeals to the outsider. Men believe in what they give for, they believe in what they work for, they believe in what they suffer for, they believe in what they die for; and the spectacle of the Christian Church giving, working, suffering, and dying for the salvation of the world is the most convincing of all arguments for its doctrine, and the most effectual demonstration of that love of Christ which it exists to proclaim. Nothing to-day in this land, or in the land of the heathen, convinces the people of the Divine origin and nature of the Christian religion like the fact of its sacrifices on their behalf. Here is the prevailing logic, eloquence, influence.

¶ What honour Dr. Jackson brought to God in Manchuria! He went there to fight the plague. He faced all the risk and the peril. Like His Master, his heart was moved with compassion for his suffering and dying brethren. He never stinted himself in labour. He spent himself in service, and at last he died. Like his Lord, he laid down his life for the brethren. And the Chinese knew it, and they knew what prompted him to do it. They knew the Christian God was at work in that sacrificial life. When the doctor was buried, the Mandarin of the district was there, and he made a speech, or rather he offered a prayer, for the speech somehow melted into a prayer, and the prayer was to Dr Jackson's God.[1]

The purest joy we can know is to bring home to men the knowledge of the love of God in the sacrifice of the Cross; the saddest of sights is that of the slothful servant who neglects to tell the joyful news. When we so live as to bring men to glorify God we may most confidently hope for a share in that glory which fadeth not away.

Will they glorify God in me?
Will they look on my life and see,
That the Lord of whom I have told
Doth Himself in His child unfold?

Can it be that this life of mine
In the light of my Lord may shine?
May I live in the world, and wear
Any likeness to Jesus there?

As I walk in these common ways,
If my life be a song of praise—
If His image in me they see,
They will glorify God in me.[2]

Crucified with Christ

Gal. ii. 20.—'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

THE one foundation, the ever-abiding power, the eternal centre of our religion is a Person, the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ Himself. The New Testament has no other answer to any question as to what it is all about than repeated affirmations of faith in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

[1] C. S. Duthie.

[1] J. D. Jones.

[2] E. H. Divall, *A Believer's Rest*, 133.

Christianity is thus not primarily a series of doctrines to be adopted, or a code of morals to be followed, or a Church to be joined, but a Person to be received and trusted and obeyed. Everything He brings us is indissolubly united to His person. He not only brings us life, proclaims the truth and shows us the way, but He is in His own person the way, the truth, and the life. He is no anonymous benefactor who can save us behind our backs without our knowledge, and without our having anything to do with Him. He is our salvation and can give us no salvation without giving us Himself.

Hence the intensely personal note in the New Testament witness. Ours is a religion of personal pronouns. *I* am crucified with Christ. Christ lives in *me*. He loved *me* and gave Himself up for *me*, says Paul. He knew of no proxy religion. To him salvation meant first and foremost a personal and individual experience of a personal Saviour who did not love man in the abstract but who loved each single soul, a Saviour who loved him and gave Himself for him as truly as if he, Paul of Tarsus, were the only sinner in the world to experience the redeeming grace of Christ. Religion to him meant personal union with Christ. He was in Christ, and Christ was in him, unfolding the eternal powers of His spirit in and through him. He was crucified with Christ. Christ was living in him.

1. What does crucifixion with Christ mean? The first thing it meant to St Paul—and he was speaking for every Christian—was the forgiveness of sins.

It is not an easy thing to believe in the forgiveness of sins. The reason we sometimes find it easy is simply because we do not take sin seriously. Sin is not just another name for imperfections and mistakes. Sin is ultimately rebellion against the holy and gracious will of God. Men want to be independent of their Maker. They do not trust Him and they do not obey Him. Instead of serving God they enthrone self in their lives, and all their sins are the fruits of this revolt.

It is impossible that sin should not cost something in a morally constituted universe. The inevitable consequence of sin is death. By revolting from the living God, man cuts himself off from the very source of life, and condemns himself to suffering and pain. The wages of sin is death.

But God wishes the death of no sinner. He cannot but pass judgment upon sin, but He takes upon His own heart the sorrows of a lost world. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. On Calvary we see revealed a secret hidden from the foundation of the world: God's heart bleeding from the wounds that should have been ours.

¶ 'If I were God,' Goethe once said, 'the sin of the world would break my heart.' Christians point to the Cross on Calvary and Jesus dying there, and say: 'He *did* die of a broken heart.' For, to quote the late Archbishop Temple, 'In the Cross we see not only what human sin does to a saintly man, but also what sin means to the heart of God.' [1]

How terrible is that road of the Cross which finally led Christ to Calvary. He suffered because He was holy and hated contact with sin. He suffered because He loved sinners and could not but suffer on their behalf. He shuddered under the impurity of the unclean and His heart was broken by the hatred and indifference of those whom He longed to bless. Through the divine solidarity of love He made everybody's sorrow His own, and every man's sin was His sin.

'And this is the judgment that the light—the light of holiness and love—came into the world, and that men loved the darkness rather than the light.' We see what these men who represented civilization and justice and religion did to Jesus. It was not simply nails that held Him to the Cross. They crucified Him with their sins. We remember Pilate who with open eyes sacrificed justice for the sake of his own career. He killed Jesus by his cowardice. The high priests killed Him with their love of power. The Pharisees crucified Him with their self-righteousness and class pride; Judas by his love of money; the mob by their materialistic preference for Barabbas, a leader who at least promised them something on earth.

But the Cross means more than judgment upon human sin. Nothing that was laid on Jesus could conquer His goodness. The waves of hate and jealousy, of baseness and treachery, that swept over His head could not put out the flame of His love. High above the raging sea of sin rose that accursed and blessed tree, and from the dying lips of Jesus we hear words of pardoning grace: 'Father, forgive them, for

[1] J. G. Patrick.

they know not what they do.' Where sin abounded, there did grace much more abound.

He *bore* those sins that nailed Him there. He faced them all and suffered through them all and tasted the bitterness of them all—and forgave them all. His word assures us that He took our place, and we know that He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. God's forgiveness is not a winking at the weaknesses of men, not a compromise between evil and holiness. His pardon goes to the very root of things; it rests on a complete and final reckoning with sin and can stand the test of life and death and the judgment seat of eternal justice.

¶ That was what F. B. Meyer was thinking of when he said: 'I am not going to die for my sins. I did that nineteen hundred years ago.' He considered himself crucified with Christ. He was there when they crucified his Lord.

2. The experience of forgiveness of sins put an end to St Paul's old life. Christ died for all 'that they who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him.' Crucifixion with Christ implied death to Self. Let us consider two aspects of this experience.

(1) We recall Paul's remarkable words, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and the lusts.' And again, 'knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the sinful nature might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' And again: 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'

Crucifixion with Christ meant *sanctification*; it meant cutting sin dead, and having nothing to do with it in the future. Paul knew very well that this programme of being dead unto sin had not been fulfilled in any Christian life. He tells his Colossian readers that they had died with Christ, and that it therefore behooved them to 'mortify their members,' that is, see to it that the programme of death to sin be realized. That great debt of obligation to the crucified Christ must make it impossible for them to make peace with any of the sins that killed Him. Paul knew that the crucifixion of the old nature meant a painful and protracted death-process, but no matter what the cost, it ought to be impossible for any forgiven sinner to indulge in the lusts of the flesh and pander to the desires of Self.

¶ The mystics always tell us that the gospel story has no power for us till it is reproduced again within our character. There too must Christ be born; there also must He grow to manhood; there too must He do many mighty works and gracious acts of healing; there in the death of our old nature there must be another crucifixion; and in our rising into a new higher life another Resurrection. And till, however they may coax and plead, however they may writhe and struggle, we nail down our evil ways on to Christ's very cross with bitter blows; and sit watching, with hard, unfeeling eyes that will not waver into pity, till they die, we are not Christian men and women.[1]

(2) But crucifixion with Christ meant even more than that to St Paul. Consider just one thing. It meant *sacrifice*. It meant to him and to his co-workers so continual a throwing away of their lives that he could say: 'I die daily.' Through a life of hardships and persecution and unceasing threatenings of death he went his way, carrying a cross in the footsteps of the Master, 'always bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus.' He entered into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. He would not let Jesus bear the Cross alone, but marched unflinching with Him, to Gethsemane and Golgotha.

Nobody can add anything to the atoning death of Christ. But the cost to us of bringing this message of pardon and reconciliation home to all men living anywhere on the face of the globe means fellowship with Christ's suffering and crucifixion with Him. It is a question not only of giving and praying and preaching, but of giving ourselves as broken bread and poured out wine.

How did Christianity survive the centuries of emperor-worship and ruthless suppression? 'The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.' How did the gospel reach us? Through men and women who considered their lives of no account, could they but advance the banner of Christ one step. Those privileges and liberties which we enjoy in so many lands were paid for with blood and devotion unto

[1] A. J. Gossip, *From the Edge of the Crowd*, 191.

death on the part of men and women gone on before.

How can we believe that the gospel can be propagated or its principles defended at no real cost to ourselves? How can we think that the Kingdom of Christ can be maintained and extended without the heart blood of sacrificial devotion? If those millions who attend the countless churches of our many Christian denominations gave Jesus their lives, not their admiration and praise and the surplus of their money and time and service, but their *lives* and their all, would not the Kingdom of God have been nearer its coming in power?

¶ The apostles and martyrs were weak and failing men, but they were possessed and filled by Jesus Christ. In Paul He tramped the highways of the ancient world and suffered imprisonment and scourgings. In the martyrs at the burning stake He triumphed anew over hate and death. In Francis of Assisi and countless saints of every Christian communion He has proved the reality of God's mercy in the midst of a world of evil. In Judson and a host of missionaries He has brought light to them that sit in the darkness of death, and in many a Kagawa He has identified Himself with outcasts and moral lepers. Oh, these Christs of the slums and the wayside, these incarnations of His forgiving love, these men and women who with gladness give themselves up to be channels for His grace—what miracles they are in a world of sin! But each and every one of them, if they could speak, would say to us: 'It was not we ourselves who thus lived. It was Christ living in us, and of His fulness have we all received grace for grace.'

When Jesus came to Galilee,
  By stony ways He trod—
Jesus, who came for you and me,
  To bring us home to God.

And when He hung on Calvary,
  The door was open'd wide;
Bitter His pains, but you and I
  Have life because He died.

So dear the love, so great the price
  He paid; and shall there be
No answering love and sacrifice
  For Him from you and me?

Faith and Life

Gal. ii. 20.—'That life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me' (R.V.).

THE text admits of being resolved into three distinct statements, and these we shall consider in turn.

1. First of all, the Apostle's language may be interpreted in this sense: *What I do with the faith is to live by it, or in it.*

In other words, St Paul tells the Galatians, and the readers of his Epistle in every land and age, that in his case the Christian faith was the informing and governing principle of his life. Such an announcement at once starts the question as to the place which people generally give to the faith in their experiences.

There are some who receive it, and who would resent the suggestion that they did not believe it. But 'believing' it means, so far as they are concerned, little more than the giving of it house-room in their minds. A certain ideal worth is attributed to its truths, but they are not allowed to exercise any authority in the practical affairs of life. They are treated like pictures, which are regarded as incongruous with the furnishings of the apartment where we transact the serious business of the day.

¶ 'Nowhere in the world at any time has religion been so thoroughly respectable as with us,' writes Professor John Dewey, 'and so nearly totally disconnected with life.'

¶ Galsworthy, in his great saga of Victorian respectability, says of the male members of his Forsyte family: 'Originally, perhaps, members of some primitive sect, they were now, in the natural course of things, members of the Church of England, and caused their wives and children to attend with some regularity the more fashionable churches of the Metropolis. To have doubted their Christianity would have caused them both pain and surprise.'

There are others, of whom it is not going too far to say that they look upon the Christian faith largely as a shroud. Wrapt about by it in death, they are satisfied that they need anticipate no sad awakening in the world to come. Like impenetrable armour, it will clothe them with a sure defence against all the alarming possibilities of woe that threaten the voyager on time's farther shore.

Now, no one would deny that 'the faith which is in the Son of God' is a faith in which a man can securely and calmly pass under the power of death. It lays hold of a salvation which is fraught with abundant consolations for that hour, and which promises fulfilments hereafter of the most joyous and uplifting kind. But it is not a power designed to come into effect, and reserved for exercise, only in the article of death. It is an energy of spirit, kindled by the consciousness of what the Son of God has done for us, which enables us to conquer the fears and temptations of life, even as it enables us to overcome the terrors of death. To die ought to be an act in the case of Christian people, rather than a mere passive experience—an act of consciously committing ourselves humbly, yet confidently, into the merciful hands of our Father in Heaven. And it can be so transformed in its significance in spite of its attendant anguish; it can be made an act of consciously entrusting the spirit to God, through the assurance communicated by 'faith in the Son of God.'

¶ Death is the common, inevitable experience, an experience clouded in mystery, and for the natural spirit dark with vague alarms. It is easy, in some moods, to ignore death; to forget its existence; to face it with recklessness. It is possible to drift into that unknown sea with failing senses and no sign of terror. But to die clear-eyed and glad, as Wesley did; to die with trembling lips breaking into praise, and the undying spirit exultant with triumph; to put to that last and uttermost test of death all the beliefs of life, and find that they are true—who does not envy an experience like this?[1]

But no less ought living also to be an act, a series of acts, in the case of Christian people, rather than an aimless and unsteered drifting down the current of time. And life in all its phases, in its contests with evil, in its self-originated enterprises, in its responses to changing and unexpected circumstances, in its familiar trials, and in its last dread ordeal, can be invested with this victorious character. For 'the faith which is in the Son of God' commands resources that apply to the manifold needs of our human lot, and that are meant to be realized by us from day to day in 'the life which we live in the flesh.'

¶ Jane Welsh Carlyle, that restless, fiery creature, said once of Thomas Erskine, 'I like Erskine, he always soothes me, he looks as if he had found peace.' And her husband, replying, gave the explanation, 'Why, yes—it has been well with Erskine since he became a Christian.'[1]

2. Turn the verse round, and look at another facet which it presents. The Apostle's language may be interpreted in this sense also: *If it were not for my faith in the Son of God, I could not live.*

That is a statement which we are justified in paraphrasing out of the text. 'I could not live,' says St Paul in effect, 'were it not for my faith in the Son of God.' Are we, then, to conclude that no man can live unless he believes as the Apostle did? Perhaps that is not an inference which the strict canons of reasoning themselves will permit us to draw, and acknowledge as valid. But it is substantiated by a better test—the test of experience. Life on the Christian level can only be lived, when there is faith in the Son of God.

Everything depends on what we mean by 'life' and 'living.' We can continue to exist, carry out the process of respiration, be affected by outward things and affect them in turn, see and hear and move about, without discovering any necessity for believing in Jesus Christ. We can think, our minds can work, we can reason and form decisions, we can mix with other people, contribute our share to the general conversation, engage in the pursuits of business or the amusements of leisure hours, without finding such exercises of intelligence and will impossible apart from 'the faith which is in the Son of God.'

But when 'life' is understood in relation to higher interests, when it is held to signify the experience of communion with God, the devotion of our manhood and womanhood to His will, the service of great purposes of goodness and love, the entertainment of hopes which are bright enough to enlighten every darkness, then we cannot live in that sense unless we are united by faith to Jesus Christ. For He is the Mediator of all these blessings and spiritual attainments. He has secured them forever to us by no mere verbal assurance that they are available—an assurance that might be doubted—but by paying the price of His own life for them, by giving Himself up.

As a matter of fact, the 'life' won't live

[1] W. H. Fitchett, *Life of John Wesley.*

[1] G. T. Bellhouse.

without faith in Jesus Christ; it won't gather to itself vitality, and develop. Conscience, untampered with, declares what we are, and condemns us to alienation from God. The law in our members treats with contempt our efforts to realize the ideal of righteousness, and purity, and charity. The pain and sorrow of the world, poverty, loneliness, disease, and death extinguish our attempts to be cheerful in our views, and hopeful in our outlook.

The life, we repeat, won't live; it won't come down out of dreamland into actuality; it cannot be lived in the flesh by us—this rich and abundant 'life' of fellowship with God and communion with His will—unless it be originated, and quickened, and sustained by 'the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.'

3. That leads us to set the text at a third angle. St Paul's language may be interpreted as meaning this also: *The way I live is accounted for by the faith I cherish.*

'That life which I now live in the flesh,' says the Apostle. A change had taken place in the scheme and character of his life. The old principles on which it had been organized had all been abandoned. He is not ashamed of the life which he is now living. On the contrary, he is prepared to have it subjected to the keenest scrutiny, and examined in the light of whatever tests his brethren may care to apply to it. One of the remarkable things in Paul's Epistles is the frank, and seemingly egotistical way, in which he constantly refers to his life and conduct, and challenges criticism. It is not that he is conscious, as he says himself, of 'having already obtained, or of having already been made perfect.' He is well aware of the infirmities that have yet to be overcome in his nature, and of the defects that have yet to be made good in his obedience to the will of God. But he is absolutely certain that his life is moving on the right lines, that his character is being disciplined into conformity with the only true standard of excellence. At the risk of being misunderstood, he is ready to claim that his life has an exemplary significance in this connection.

How can he go to such a daring length? How can he approach so near to the verge of self-complacency, and quote with satisfaction, 'that life which I now live in the flesh.' The answer is, because he is utterly unconscious of any merit attaching to himself on account of what he is, and of what he aspires to become. He is alive to the fact—it is as clear as daylight to him—that the origin of 'that life which he is now living in the flesh' did not lie in ideal proposals which he made to himself, and that the progress he has achieved was not owing to his having summoned to their service all the latent forces of his moral nature. 'That life' was begotten by the revelation to him of the love of the Son of God, and was sustained and developed by the same gracious vitalizing power. Therefore as its commencement was due to Jesus Christ, and its continuance and welfare depended on Jesus Christ, Paul could adduce 'that life' of his, could instance himself, as an example to all.

Can we adduce ourselves? Can we claim, in no presumptuous or self-laudatory manner, that there are distinctive features about our life that are only to be accounted for by our faith in the Son of God? Is it a matter of secret or avowed gratification to us, that we are what we are through the exercise of our natural capacities—self-made men and women? Or, are we conscious of being different from what we would have been, if we had been left to our own resources of mind and will? Are there things that we have been able to do and things that we have been able to bear; are there great interests that dominate us, and high and glad hopes that inspire us, none of which would have been possible had the ordering and development of our life been in our own hands? Is our experience, the actual texture of our ideas and desires and purposes, compatible with the most ordinary explanation? Or, does it present a problem, the solution of which is only to be found in the grace of Jesus Christ? 'That life which I am now living in the flesh'—is it adducible as evidence of the redeeming power of the Son of God, 'who loved me and gave himself up for me'?

¶ Baron von Hügel wrote in 1911 concerning his religious faith: 'I should not be physically alive at this moment, I should be, were I alive at all, a corrupt or at least an incredibly unhappy, violent, bitter, self-occupied destructive soul, were it not for religion—for its having come and saved me from myself—it, and nothing else; it, in place of everything else, it, in a sense, against everything else.'

Love Divine

Gal. ii. 20.—'The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

When we think of the love of God we must not denude our conception of all the ardent feeling which is so infinitely precious to us on the human plane. We must not so rationalize the eternal love as to make it like sunshine without warmth. We have been far too much afraid of the element of feeling in the Divine love and what we have proclaimed as love has often been so passionless that it could no more wake the dead than moonlight can evoke the flowers of the spring.

¶ James Arthur Hadfield, in his essay on *The Psychology of Power*, writes of a certain type of religious teacher: 'In their dread of emotionalism—the unruly debauch of unrestrained feeling—and its consequences in conduct, they have attempted to abolish all emotion as a thing either dangerous or vulgar. In so doing they have failed to appreciate that the Christian religion is founded on an emotion—the all-embracing emotion of love. To rob the soul of emotion is to deprive it of its driving force and leave it lifeless. Matthew Arnold's description of religion as being morality *tinged* with emotion is a delightful though unconscious satire on what religion actually is at the present day, but certainly not what it should be.'

1. We all recognize the dangers of an emotional religion, but there are almost equally great dangers in a religion from which emotion is banished. If we drain away the emotion we leave the religion hard and dry. And because we de-sentimentalize there is a correlative process, and we de-personalize. The personal and the emotional have always had their prominent ministry in the lives of the saints. 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me,' says St Paul. 'Weigh diligently,' writes Martin Luther, 'every word of Paul, and especially mark well his pronouns . . . wherein also there is ever some vehemency and power.' And it is equally true of Luther himself. Take his great commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, and you find that although it is so martial in its mood, and so severely and consistently polemical, yet the personal emphasis is rarely absent, and the emotions are frequently stirred like the brimming fulness of the Spring tides. Even Calvin himself becomes emotional, and a tender sentiment lies upon his thought, when he contemplates the wonders of redeeming grace. It is equally true of another man, nearer to our own time. There is nothing more characteristic of Spurgeon than the personal emphasis, the daring use of the pronouns, and the rich, full sentiment that plays about his contemplations of the grace and love of his Lord. These are all strong men, giants along the pilgrim way, and they never attempt to denude their piety of emotion or to de-personalize their religious life.

¶ There is a glow and warmth in the Letters of Samuel Rutherford beside which our lukewarmness and propriety and fear of emotion and extravagance stand rebuked and put to shame. 'I should be happy if I had an errand to the world for some few years, to spread proclamations and outcries and love-letters of the highness, the highness for evermore, the glory, the glory for evermore, of the Ransomer whose clothes are wet and dyed in blood.' 'He is a Rose that beautifieth all the Upper Garden of God; a leaf of that Rose of God for smell is worth a world.' 'It were a well-spent journey to creep, hands and feet, through seven deaths and seven hells, to enjoy Him up at the well-head.' When will our sluggish souls learn such burning enthusiasm, such abandonment of affection, for our Saviour and Lord? Samuel Rutherford should conduct us many a mile nearer to the goal.[1]

2. Now turn to the Apostle's personal glorying in the ministry of redemption. 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.' And what was the purpose of the Lord's redemption? Humanity lay in bondage. There was the fearful appetite for sin. There was the relentless claim of violated law. There was the Nemesis of guilt. There was the power of the devil. There was the clutch of superstition. And there was death and the fear of death. That was the bondage. And the glorious crusade of the Lover was by love to bring 'deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.'

'*He loved me.*' (1) Now love is *holy*. At the very heart of infinite love is incorruptible holiness, and in that innermost holiness lie the

[1] A. Smellie, *Service and Inspiration*, 59.

purpose and promise of our redemption. But it is just here that false sentiment is born. There is a sentimentalism which bows before no shrine of virgin flame, and its morals are always lackadaisical, and its scheme of redemption is always cheap. It conceives love as a pretty rainbow, and not as 'a rainbow round about the throne.' It gathers a handful of flowers on the lower slopes of the mountains, but never ranges above the snow-line, amid the awe-inspiring, breath-gripping solitudes of the eternal snows. That is the contrast between sentiment and sentimentalism. Sentimentalism is born among the flowers: a noble sentiment is born among the snows. Sentimentalism moves easily among kindnesses: sentiment moves wonderingly amid holiness. Sentimentalism takes liberties, while 'the fear of the Lord is clean.' When, therefore, we hear the evangel, 'He loved me,' we know that the glorious ministry is born of holiness; love is holiness in exercise, it is holiness in gracious movement, it is 'a river of water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.' Our Lover is holy, and holy is His love. 'He loved me!'—the unholy and the unclean.

¶ God is Love. But we miss the full wonder and glory of that supreme revelation if we let the term Love, as we understand it, supply the whole meaning of the term God. There is a great danger lest we forget the Majesty of God, and so think of His Love as a mere amiability. We must first realize Him as exalted in unapproachable Holiness, so that our only fitting attitude before Him is one of abject self-abasement, if we are to feel the stupendous marvel of the Love which led Him, so high and lifted up, to take His place beside us in our insignificance and squalor that He might unite us with Himself.[1]

(2) And because love is holy, love is inconceivably *sensitive*. The unhallowed is the insensitive. The unclean makes the moral powers numb, and after every sin the sensitiveness is dulled, and life's responsiveness impaired. The gradient of purity is also the gradient of feeling: they advance or retrograde with equal steps. And therefore it is impossible for us to realize, even remotely, the sensitiveness of holiness, and therefore, again, our Saviour's sorrows are inconceivable. 'Was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow?' Holy love is infinitely sensitive, and 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.'

¶ We can get a faint idea of the kind of suffering sinfulness causes to one who is holy, from human experience; of the agony which is caused to very pure and good people by the knowledge of others' sins. John Allen's biographer tells how one might have seen a look of intense, almost physical agony on his face, when told of sin in unexpected places. And we read that almost the first words spoken by the wife of Thomas Arnold after his tragically sudden death were these: 'What I chiefly think of is that he is free from the sight of sin. You know how that pained him above everything else, and now he will see it again no more.' But what would the sins of the world, so far as we know them, mean to us, if we were absolutely holy! What must they have meant to the human soul of the Son of God!

(3) And because holy love is sensitive, holy love is *redemptive*. Holiness is always positive and aggressive, seeking by its own 'consuming fire' to burn the hateful germs of sin. We may test our growth in holiness, not by our recoil from uncleanness, but by our positive action upon it. A negative holiness is as monstrous as a square circle, or a heatless fire. 'He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and ye shall be. . . .' Which just means this: holy love shall be an eager servant in the ministry of a positive redemption. And so 'He loved me,' He saw me in my low estate, and in His holiness He sought my holiness and my everlasting peace.

'He loved me, and *He gave Himself for me.*' For holy, sensitive, redemptive love must of necessity be sacrificial. 'He gave Himself for me!' He endued Himself with the robe of flesh, He entered the house of bondage, He took upon Him the form of a bondslave that He might set the bondslave free. He walked the pilgrim path of limitation, the path of sorrow and temptation; face to face He met the devil, face to face He met 'the terror feared of man,' becoming 'obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' 'He gave Himself for me!' And in that holy sacrifice of love, the holy law of God received perfect obedience, the violated law of God received a holy satisfaction, the sovereignty of the devil was overthrown, boastful death lost its sting, and

[1] William Temple.

the omnivorous grave its victory! 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' And *He* did it all! 'Wilt thou bring *thy* cowl, thy shaven crown, thy chastity, thy purity, thy works, thy merits?' He did it all! Says Luther, 'Paul had nothing in his mouth but Christ.'

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.'

A Placard All-Sufficient

Gal. iii. 1.—'O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?'

'O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you—you who had Jesus Christ the crucified placarded before your eyes?' (Moffatt).

THERE is nothing that ever creates greater sorrow or causes more searching of heart than the defection from the Christian faith of those who have been reared and nurtured within its tradition. When once a man has known the highest, how can he ever be content with a second best? How can he ever be persuaded to renounce the highest? When once Christ is truly known and His way fully understood, how can any other name or any other system exercise power of attraction? The question is both interesting and disturbing. 'We needs must love the highest when we see it,' but is there some baleful influence in the world that would seek to compel us to substitute for the love of the highest a love of the shoddy and artificial and second-rate?

The question came home with some force to St Paul, for he had himself been the means of introducing these people of Galatia to all the wonder and attractiveness of Christ and Christian experience. Now he found them reverting to an unworthy form of Christianity, if it could be called Christianity at all, and shedding their first and most glorious faith in Christ, the Christ of the Cross, for a form of religion that was powerless to bring either salvation or peace of mind. It was a problem in Apostolic days, and it is a problem that is very modern. How, for example, could a whole nation that had been reared in the tradition of Luther and evangelical Christianity so speedily be induced to acquiesce in a system of government that was founded on brutality, openly boasted its scorn of Christianity, renounced the moral law, and glorified the barbarous and cruel?

One remembers St Paul's reaction to the situation he found. You have been bewitched, he said, you have been the unconscious victims of a malign sorcerer. You have come under the blighting influence of the Evil Eye. Dr W. M. Macgregor suggests that the Apostle said this half playfully, but in any event there is little doubt, from the Greek word he uses, that it is to this popular superstition concerning the Evil Eye that he refers, without of course implying that he himself believes it. Something analogous to that, he suggests, must surely have happened. It is interesting to note how widespread this belief in the Evil Eye has been. It was recognized by the laws of Rome, and charms against it were worn both by man and beast. It was a universal superstition amongst savage races, and to this day lingering traces of this superstition are to be found in many parts of the world. The people of Italy are particularly affected by it. In Ireland, at any rate up to recent times, it was advisable when looking at a child to say, 'God bless it,' to avoid being suspected of having the Evil Eye. In India the belief was universal. Now superstitions are only superstitions, but a superstition so widespread is bound to have had some originating cause, and perhaps this particular superstition owed its universality to the fact that men believe that it could only be through the operation of some external and baleful agency that entirely inexplicable misfortunes came. 'Who hath *bewitched* you?' cried St Paul.

Mr Harold Nicolson in the brilliant little book he wrote in 1939 entitled *Why Britain is at War* tells how the spell was cast over a whole people. He described the carefully staged appearances of the Führer, 'as some high priest emerging from the outer darkness. A wave of ecstasy would sweep over the crowd. Even the coldest and most critical among his audience would be affected by the surrounding orgy of emotion.'

Yes, bewitchment, however it be explained, is a fact that is incontestable, and it is a fact that the Christian religion has had to contend against all through its long history. We can

be lured away from our faith: we can yield to the siren voices: we can succumb to the pull of a fatal fascination. There is an Evil Eye constantly directed upon us, a kingdom of evil fighting for the mastery with the Kingdom of God. Let us see therefore where we ourselves stand, and let us strengthen our own defences.

1. Well, to begin with, we stand quite definitely with St Paul and the early Christians. There has been placarded before our eyes Jesus Christ the Crucified. Placarded is the exact translation of the Greek word used in the New Testament. St Paul might have announced as a subject: the All-Sufficiency of the Placard. I came among you, he might have said, with a message so concentrated and crisp in form that it could all have been expressed on a placard. Indeed the test of any message we deliver is that it should be capable of being summed up in this brief and epigrammatic form. It should all be able to go on an easily legible placard. Spurgeon who must have uttered in his long years of preaching millions of words said near the end of his days that his message could all be summed up in four short words, 'Jesus died for me.' Mr Nicolson, in the book just referred to, was equally terse and telling in answering the question why we were at war. Many treatises and histories could have been written in answer to that question but Mr Nicolson said, 'The answer to that question can be given in two words, Adolf Hitler.'

If in the Christian Church we had to choose a placard summing up our message it might also be equally terse. Why are we supporters of the Church? 'Christ Crucified.' That is our placard. We need no other. The trouble is that we sometimes hide that placard away out of sight and forget about it. That great preacher, the late Dr J. D. Jones of Bournemouth, said after he retired, 'I don't know whether I am misjudging when I say that preachers often seem to me to fight shy of the big themes and to be content with secondary and subsidiary topics. Since I have had the opportunity of sitting more often in the pew, I have heard sermons on social topics, on peace, on ethical subjects, but I can't recall a single sermon on such a central and vital theme as the Incarnation. We are never going to build strong churches that way.' Let us placard Christ, for after all, everything else is there. What we are asked to do is not primarily to rearrange social conditions, or to preach general goodwill, but to get Christ into the hearts of men as a living reality. After that the rest automatically follows.

2. But now we come to our question. What is it that bewitches us and that lures us away from Him? What modern equivalent of the so-called Evil Eye lights upon us, and diverts us from our purpose? Why are men so willing to throw away this most precious of all gospels and substitute for it the tawdry and the meretricious? Well St Paul knew that it was no Evil Eye that he was contending against in his day, but determined and aggressive men who were resolved to upset his own good work and to render it nugatory. They said: It is not enough to be a Christian: you must submit to other rites, like circumcision. They magnified meaningless externals. They were for adding something to the plain message of Christ, as if you can add anything to the tremendous placard of 'Christ Crucified.'

In our own day we know what this kind of addition means and the needless confusions that it engenders. One says, 'You must accept the authority of the Pope,' another, 'You must believe in the Apostolic Succession and that it can only operate in one particular way.' Others assert that you must become a Christian Scientist, or a Christian Pacifist or a Christian something else. Is not the platform of Christ Crucified ample enough for all, and are not the implications of that placard enough to sustain us all?

3. But sometimes we proceed not by way of addition, but by way of subtraction, and an attempt is made to reduce the placard still further, and make it simply 'Christ.' A vague belief in a vague Christ! What results from this? The very pith and essence of the faith are lost, and Jesus becomes an idealistic and mistaken visionary, not the Son of God with power, not the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. Bewitched by the seeming simplicity of such a belief men and women are turned aside from that profession of faith which alone can bestow a quickening and dynamic energy. Only a bewitchment of the reason can

explain also why we have allowed our own high standards so often to be steadily lowered year by year. We forget that we are constantly called upon to fight against evil wherever evil may lift its head. Righteousness is very often oppressed. It is oppressed wherever liberty becomes licence on stage or screen, or in the books we read. We seem to have been so bewitched indeed that we do not recognize the persecution of the soul of man when it is deprived of its birthright, when it becomes so enveloped in an atmosphere charged with impurity that all possibility of moral growth is thwarted. If the Western democracies are to retain their strength in all its fulness it can only be by enthroning Christ Crucified, by making that placard visible to all men, and by refusing to lower the standards that have so proudly been upheld in days gone by. Reviewing a certain Play a well-known dramatic critic recently said, 'At a time when the democracies are staking a claim to be more civilized than certain others, it is a little unfortunate to have this metallic mirror of freedom in the great Republic flashed in our faces.'

Another critic described that same Play as a crude, coarse narrative of the sexual jungle. 'Jungle,' he said 'is the dramatic and moral keyword.' When Christ Crucified is our standard we can at any rate be sure that the way to sanity and peace and happiness is always open.

During the Glasgow Exhibition of 1938 there were two natives of India who were selling charms which guaranteed to the wearers that they would never be in want. Unfortunately when the Exhibition was over these same natives of India became chargeable to Public Assistance! Here we offer the only real and lasting charm. Keep your eyes on Christ Crucified. Let Him be the measure and the standard of your life.

Jesus! the Name that charms our hearts.

R. J. Wedderspoon.

Rival Paths to Perfection

Gal. iii. 3.—'Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?' (R.V.).

What is before the Apostle's mind as he writes these words is the conversion of the Galatians and their religious relapse. Once they had been pagans, worshipping gods that were no gods with a merely ritual service—in bondage to 'weak and beggarly elements,' which whatever else it means, means enslaved by some sort of religious materialism. Suddenly Paul appeared among them with his Gospel. He held up Christ on His Cross: 'placarded' Him, as he says in this chapter, before their eyes. The sight of Christ crucified arrested them as it has arrested innumerable hearts since. They were fascinated by it. Christ entered into their souls in the power of His passion; He lived in them, and they died to their old selves and lived in Him.

But Paul was not the only preacher who appeared in Galatia. He had hardly left the country when others appeared in his track. They had a new 'placard' to exhibit. It was a placard on which were engrossed the countless formal precepts of the Jewish law—its covenant badge of circumcision—its sacred calendar, with its days, and months, and seasons, and years—its distinctions of food into clean and unclean—its whole system of visible, statutory, outwardly imposed ordinances in which the religious life was to be embodied and expressed. Strange as it may seem, this placard also had its fascination. It exerted a malignant spell over the Galatians which checked if it did not neutralize the beneficent spell of the Cross. They actually thought they were making progress, reaching a higher stage of religion. *This* progress! the Apostle exclaims; *this* a step towards perfection! Can folly go so far? Having begun *in the Spirit*, with a great inward liberation, renewal, and reinforcement of life wrought by God through Christ crucified, can you imagine that you are carrying your Christian life to perfection when you abandon all this, and submit once more to statutory observances that only touch the outer life, or to put it a little scornfully, *the flesh*?

This is the situation which the verse presents to us, and we may generalize it in order to apply it to ourselves. Religion begins in inspiration, that is, in enthusiastic inner freedom begotten by Christ in the soul, and owning an absolute responsibility to Him, and to Him alone; but it is only too apt to belie its origin and its true nature, and instead of cherishing inspiration and liberty as the very breath of its life, to relapse into fixity, ceremonial and routine, and actually to glorify

these as the authentic tokens of the Divine. Let us look at some illustrations of this.

1. The most conspicuous, perhaps, is to be found in *the sphere of thought*. No men were ever so free in their thinking as those who wrote the New Testament. They reconstruct the whole world in thought for themselves, with Christ as its Alpha and Omega, its source, its centre, and its goal. Nobody had done this before, and no outward law imposed such thoughts upon them; they were thoughts freely produced from within by men who felt that they were both free and bound to think and speak as they did.

This liberty of mind is not inconsistent with a harmonious witness to Jesus, but it enables the Apostles to combine variety with unity, and to bring out different elements in the unsearchable riches of Christ. The fundamental unity of the apostolic religion is unquestionable: it is one and the same Christ who is Lord and Saviour to all who speak to us in the New Testament. But though Christ is the same in all, yet to Paul He is predominantly the Christ who atones for sin and brings the gift of a Divine righteousness; to John, He is the Son who reveals the Father and communicates eternal life; to James, He is the Law-giver and the Judge; to Peter, the Author of immortal hope; and in Hebrews, the great High Priest of humanity.

But though this intellectual freedom, which is illustrated on every page of the New Testament, is the proper attribute of Christian minds, how many there are in the Church who seem to be fascinated by the very opposite. What they think indispensable is not inspiration, not the stimulation of intelligence by the crucified Christ, but fidelity to a formula in which the truth has once for all been embodied, and which is never to be subject to reflection or revision any more. But the Church of any given age is an assembly of fallible men; and no one who knows what it is to 'begin in the Spirit'—no one who has experienced that deep-reaching, all-embracing emancipation which comes to the intelligence as to the moral nature when the power of Christ's passion descends into it—can ever identify a law of the Church *simpliciter* with the truth of God. The only way to become perfect is to cherish the initial liberating impulse, to keep our being open to the whole stimulus of Christ, to grow and still to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.

¶ To the conventionally minded churchman, faith means a deposit of beliefs crystallized long ago. It is the body of dogma made by men now dead to which living men must subscribe, and neither one jot nor one tittle must pass away from that enduring law. The look of men who conceive faith in this fashion is always turning backward. They want to establish what the early Church Fathers said or what the Council of Nicæa or Ephesus or Chalcedon decreed. If they can establish this, then they think they have set the boundaries beyond which no proper and orthodox thinking must pass. If the Church was thus and thus in the sacrosanct yesterdays, then thus it must remain.[1]

¶ 'The most melancholy thought,' said George Eliot in a letter to F. W. H. Myers, 'would be that we, in our own persons, had measured and exhausted the sources of spiritual good.'

2. Another instance of the working of the same principle is seen in *the tendency to stereotype Christian experience*, and to demand that in all natures it shall assume precisely the same forms. What is produced in the human soul when Christ crucified is placarded before it? Sometimes there is apparently a prevailing type of experience: in the great revival of the eighteenth century, for example, there was often an overpowering sense of sin, which was suddenly swallowed up in a great joy and peace in believing. But we know that there are other types. The spell of Christ crucified may exert itself in other ways; it may exhibit its power in a new hungering and thirsting after righteousness, in a longing to see the sovereignty of the Lord realized in human society, in a strange new birth of love in the soul. Such new or divergent experiences are not to be distrusted: the one thing we have to distrust is fixity, the tying down of the Cross to one particular mode of exercising its power. In grace there is the infinite variety which living nature itself presents; and the way of perfection is not to reduce all genuine Christianity to what *we* think the true pattern, but to trust and recognize as genuinely Christian all experiences which men owe to Christ.

[1] W. R. Bowie, *The Renewing Gospel*, 273.

3. We should let the same considerations weigh with us *in regard to Christian worship*. Worship is a function of the Church, and in its worship, as in its thinking, the Church began 'in the Spirit.' Everything in its worship was original, and every one might contribute to it as the Spirit impelled him. 'When ye come together,' Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 'each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation.' The Apostle does not blame this nor repress it; he only attempts to regulate it. He lays down the laws, which are themselves suggested by the Spirit, of edification and decorum. Nothing is to have a place in worship that does not build up the Church, or that is in itself unseemly. But short of this, worship is free; and the larger the number who contribute to it and the more original and independent their contributions are, the more perfect is the worship. Paul dreaded the imposition of restrictions. 'Quench not the Spirit,' he said, with this very danger in view.

The quenching of the Spirit in worship, however—the relapse in the Church's collective confession of God and testimony to Him from inspiration to routine—is the most constant feature of its history. It is one long story of what began in the Spirit trying to make itself perfect in the flesh. At a very early period modes of worship became fixed—perhaps, to begin with, modes of the celebration of the sacraments. Eventually, however, laws were made for every part of the Church service. The prayers to be said, the Psalms to be sung, the Scriptures to be read, were all fixed; often it was fixed, by custom if not by law, that the preacher should preach from the Scripture that had been read. Nothing was left to inspiration at all. There was no point at which the Spirit could manifest itself even if it would. No one would say that there are no advantages in this. It is an advantage to be protected against arbitrariness and caprice. It is an advantage to have noble forms of worship, even if we have no more, and not to be at the mercy of people who possibly are not always inspired. It is more than an advantage, it is a necessity, to have some element of orderly habit in everything which is to last. But surely we should have said beforehand that no one could think that to be tied to such forms, unable to vary them or to do anything outside of them, was the way to perfection. Yet strange to say this *is* what many think, and there is nothing that shocks them more—nothing, as they would say, that is more offensive to their conscience as loyal church people—than the idea of modifying the use and wont of worship.

Few Church members realize what large numbers of people there are whose hearts have been touched and quickened by Christ crucified but who are outside of the fellowship of the churches because they could not enter without having the Spirit quenched. They associate with each other in meetings of their own, where they can impart to each other some spiritual gift; in the absence of forms they are far more like a New Testament Church than any of the organized denominations; and though they have often the drawbacks of a defective education, they contain a great deal of the most vital and valuable Christianity of the country. The churches have lost much, which, by abandoning their original freedom, have made it impossible for such Christians to remain within their borders. They ought to make room for them.

4. A further application which could be made of the text would be to *the Church's efforts to do good to the world*. An immense amount of effort seems to be put forth here with no adequate result. Is not that in great measure because the Church, in a world in which everything is alive and moving, has sunk too much from inspiration to routine? It goes on doing what it once did with effect, but what is effective no longer, because all around it has changed. We want to discover, not a new Gospel, but new ways of reaching man with the Gospel; a new intellectual construction of it which will answer to the ideals of truth and knowledge in the mind of our own time—a new utterance for it in the language of those to whom it is preached—new ways of helping the poor—new ways of exerting an influence on the social life in which we all share—new modes of approaching those who need the Gospel but do not want it; a new gift of inspiration, in short, telling on our life in every direction.

¶ This is the truth expressed by that great servant of mankind, Octavia Hill, in the words which she used in returning thanks for the portrait presented to her by her friends in 1898. 'When I am gone, I hope my friends

will not try to carry out any special system, or to follow blindly in the track which I have trodden. New circumstances require various efforts; and it is the spirit, not the dead form, that should be perpetuated. When the time comes that we slip from our places, and they are called to the front as leaders, what should they inherit from us? Not a system, not an association, not dead formulas. . . . What we care most to leave them is not any tangible thing, however great, not any memory, however good, but the quick eye to see, the true soul to measure, the large hope to grasp the mighty issues of the new and better days to come—greater ideals, greater hope, and patience to realize both.'[1]

Only as we stand in the presence of Christ crucified, and looking out on the world and its needs feel that we are at once free and bound to serve it in every way which the love kindled in us by the Cross inspires, are we in the truly Christian attitude. It is the attitude in which goodness is not imposed, but creative. It is the attitude of the new man for whom all that is old has passed away. The blighting power of routine has passed, and in the new life of the Spirit, with its enthusiasm and liberty, the hope of perfection is opened to us at last.

Faith

Gal. iii. 11.—'The just shall live by faith.'

THERE is a story in the life of Martin Luther that on his first visit to Rome as a credulous monk of the old Church he was crawling up the Santa Scala—which is reputed to be the staircase of Pontius Pilate's house in Jerusalem, up which our Lord walked during His trial and which all pilgrims to the Eternal City must ascend on hands and knees with prescribed prayers at each step—and when Luther was near the top there flashed into his mind the words, 'the just shall live by faith,' so he got to his feet again and walked out. When Paul quoted these words from the Old Testament what he meant was that not all the rigmarole of Jewish religious observance, the fasting, the praying, the prohibitions, the striving and wrestling to live up to all the impossible demands of canon law, none of that would save a man's soul but only faith. And when Luther got off his knees on the Santa Scala what *he* meant was that not by dint of crawling up holy staircases or storing up merit by reciting innumerable Ave Marias, or carrying a saint's picture next your heart, or a piece of the true Cross in your pocket—not by any of these or the rest of the mediaeval programme for acquiring credit in heavenly places could a man obtain salvation but only by faith.

Faith is the corner stone of Reformed Christianity to-day, as it was for Paul, for Augustine, for Luther, for Wesley. But many people to-day find it hard to understand just what is meant by faith. I remember being rather shaken at a meeting I had addressed before the War, where I had stressed the fact that no one could really make head or tail of Christianity without faith, and one of the audience said, 'Why is it that ministers always take refuge in this wonderful word "faith." Whenever anything is difficult to understand or more probably when they are not very sure of what they are trying to say themselves they always fall back on this magic word "faith."' I think that is quite a fair criticism and a point which is worth clearing up. So let us ask ourselves, What do we mean by faith? Is it another name for credulity as the Marxists would have it? Or does it mean that extra ingredient which makes the difference between a Christian and an enlightened pagan? Or does it perhaps mean neither of those but a personal relationship between a man and his Maker which is the heart and soul of the Christian gospel? Let us look at these three possibilities in turn and see if we can get our minds clear on what to some of us may be a vexed question.

1. First of all then: Is faith just another name for credulity? Certainly the way the word is used sometimes gives countenance to all that the Communists say about the gullibility of Christians. When some charlatan pitches his tent in a fairground or hires a public hall for a week's money-making he advertises it often as a campaign of faith-healing where all known diseases of the human body can be cured without medical or surgical intervention by the simple process of having faith. Or when some enterprising Italian priest contrives to discover a miraculous well or a statue of the

[1] C. Edmund Maurice, *Life of Octavia Hill*, 582.

Madonna that weeps at stated intervals, the lame, the halt, and the blind are encouraged to visit the place of pilgrimage and they are told if they have faith all their troubles will be over.

Now there is no doubt that healing was practised in the Early Church and that the Church has lost the art to-day. It is equally certain that some gifted people to-day can cure certain types of ailments by working on the patients' minds, but it is a complete misuse of the word faith to suggest that there is anything in common between the faith that is the foundation of Christian teaching and the credulity of people who attend the dubious quackeries of twentieth-century witch-doctors whether under the auspices of Rome or not.

2. If what we mean by faith, then, is not just another name for gullibility, is it perhaps that extra something that a Christian is supposed to have which makes the difference between him and an intelligent agnostic ? Here again we are up against a real misunderstanding. Because many people use the word faith as another name for ignorance. Before science told us even what little we know now about the wonders of the universe, the laws of Nature, the interplay of mind and matter, there was a tendency to regard faith as what was needed to fill up the blanks in our knowledge of how the world was run. Reason and observation and experience could tell you so much of the mystery that lies behind life : how things happen and why, but once you came to the point where your natural wits and knowledge could not tell you any more then you used an extra ingredient called faith. Not many years ago, for example, many people were saying that their faith told them that God created the world in six days, no more and no less, precisely in the year 4004 B.C., and in the autumn, because the apples were ripe in the Garden of Eden. But that wasn't faith at all, it was bad science. If we make faith something that fills up the gaps in our knowledge, then it is bound to shrink the more we learn about the mysterious workings of Providence and the gentlemen of the Rationalist Press will rightly accuse us of making faith equal to ignorance.

3. That certainly is not what Paul meant, or Luther or any of the great Christian thinkers. They meant something much wider, much deeper, and much simpler. Let us go back to that scene in the Gospels where Jesus takes a little child and sets him in the midst of the disciples and says : unless you turn and become like little children you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The chief natural characteristic of a small child is its trustfulness. It is completely dependent on its mother. It knows it can come to no harm if she is there. When it is learning to walk, if she walks back a few paces and calls it to come it will take that very big venture of the first toddling steps just because it knows that she is there and will catch it if it stumbles and falls. A child's whole early life then is based on complete trust and dependence on its mother. And that, says Jesus, is what conversion means—turning from reliance on our own efforts to a childlike reliance and trust and dependence upon God. Humbling our pride and admitting that we are helpless babes when faced with the gigantic problem of keeping our feet in this bewildering and frightening world. And the short name for all that is faith.

Faith, then, is not really an intellectual thing at all—it is not something that needs scholarship to understand or theologians to explain—it is something that the old body with her feet on the fender in the evening of life can share with the senior wrangler or the Cabinet Minister. It is a personal relationship with God, a committal of our whole life to God—and when we say God we mean Jesus because the word God is an empty picture frame which can hold any kind of portrait—our own included. The name God needs to be clothed with the living flesh and blood and words and deeds of Jesus to bring it to life and give it its deepest meaning. So when Paul quotes the words : 'the just shall live by faith,' and when Luther sees them flash in front of his eyes on the Santa Scala they both mean in their own day and generation that the only possible road to the good life and to lasting happiness is to give up any hope of acquiring merit in the sight of God by relying on our own efforts to do good deeds, and take the harder path of admitting that nothing we can do is free from pride and selfishness, and that the only way to start to overcome them is by getting into a right relationship with Jesus. It was because both Paul and Luther saw the hopelessness of ever getting anywhere without it that they made faith in Christ the

pivot round which the whole of their teaching revolved.

Faith in Christ just means taking Him at His word. When He says: 'Follow me,' He is saying it to us to-day. If Jesus says, 'In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you,' then He has done it. If He says, 'lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,' He meant it and it is true. That is the gospel—the Good News. That is what sent Paul and the early Christians out into the pagan world without fear. They knew that of themselves they were puny mortals—as scared of the unknown future as any one else. But Jesus said He was with them and they trusted Him. They knew that their own lives no matter how hard they tried were poor caricatures of what children of God should be. But Jesus, as well as saying, 'Follow me,' had said 'your sins are forgiven,' and Jesus didn't lie.

So we can see clearly why it is that Paul makes so much of faith and why it is still the very essence of the Christian life, what distinguishes a Christian in fact from any one else. Faith means putting Christ in the centre of your life and trusting Him through thick and thin. Becoming more and more Christ-centred and less and less self-centred may not come easily to us. We may only be able to say as another wandering wayfarer said once: 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' But Jesus Himself has said that if we have as much faith as a grain of mustard seed the result can be measured in terms of mountains. If your car is in proper order, you start it by turning a switch and touching the self-starter. You have faith that there is energy in the battery and power in the engine. You could never get that loaded car up a steep hill if you tried to do it by yourself. But your faith in the car knows that it can do it and the power you release does the rest. In our own lives it is the touch of faith that releases the power of God, and the power of God accomplishes the thing we desire. Believe that the power is available, says Jesus. Act as though the power were available and God will not let you down.

WILLIAM NEIL.

The Faith of the Just

Gal. iii. 11.—'The just shall live by faith.'

1. ALL St Paul's thoughts about Christ and religion grew directly out of his own experience. They were not the laboured production of philosophical meditation, but the utterances of the inner history of his spirit, an attempt to fix in words the transformation of the self. Nor is there the smallest doubt about the means by which this transition has been effected. It stands on every page which the Apostle has left to us. It is faith. And this is no merely individual experience peculiar to himself, so at least he believes. He has discovered the secret of all good life: the principle on which all righteous men have lived, and must live, is—the just shall live by faith.

Unfortunately it was not long before a mistake arose about the meaning of this word 'faith.' Even within the New Testament itself we find that faith had begun to mean simply belief. It was supposed that faith meant *the* faith, the acceptance of certain correct ideas about God and Christ, that men were made righteous by the orthodoxy of their creed. That is an error which is not unknown to-day. But we shall never understand Paul if we suppose that faith meant that to him. Doubtless the conversion did change his opinions and transform his theology, but that was the effect and not the cause. The fact is that Paul never had a fixed and definite system of religious belief. One of the most instructive things about this man is the vitality of his mind. We may trace a progress of thought in his epistles. He seems never to have been satisfied with his way of interpreting the gospel, for he was always growing and seeking new ideas to interpret the meaning of God and Christ. No; it was not his theology which changed—it was the whole self and its direction. He had found a new centre for the affections and the will: not a new creed but a new Master. He had now an ideal which could unify his distracted will, a Person who could engage his affections. He had brought his life to a point, and so had found power and peace.

¶ I was once in the rooms of a geologist who had been to the Arctic Circle with a research party. On the wall was a large, coloured

picture of an iceberg, a mountain of glassy green, standing up like the Rock of Gibraltar out of a sea white with ice-floes. 'I had tremendous luck with that,' he said; 'we were only a mile away when we saw it turn right over.' He told me it was the most exciting natural phenomenon he had ever witnessed; the vast under-sea bulk of the iceberg heaving up, and all the glittering spurs and ridges of the crest plunging down; the noise; the sea rocking like a huge feather bed; the iceberg transformed in shape and colour; everything turned over on to a new axis; a new centre of gravity.[1]

2. St. Paul was not the only man in those days who was seeking salvation; nor was he the only man who thought he had found it. The world was full of seekers for redemption and full, too, of suggestions for finding it. Many of these ways were little more than superstition or magic, offering eternal life as the consequence of ritual or ceremonies. But these ways had little to do with just men or those who thirsted after righteousness. There were, however, two ways of salvation which attracted some nobler spirits and attempted to meet the need of those who hungered after goodness. There was, first, the way which Paul himself had tried for many years—the way of the pious Jew, the way of the Pharisee. We may call that the way of obedience. But their way of obedience suffered from an inherent defect—it fostered an anxious scrupulosity and mixed up the values of life. The way of mere obedience could offer no joy or exhilaration, no progress. From the heathen world came another offer of a way of salvation. It came from a school of men to whom the world has much cause for gratitude—the Stoics. To them we owe most of the enlightened and humane elements in the Roman law, and through it they have affected the law of all the world. The Stoic had a way of salvation to propose—the way of acquiescence. To acquiesce was their practical message to the distracted soul. But it is only half a salvation. The note of this type of spiritual life is a sad resignation. We miss the sound of joy and confidence and hope.

When we compare these other ways of salvation with that which Paul had found we can see that he had some reason to believe that his was a salvation, a life, which threw all the others into the shade and proceeded on a different principle. In his faith he had found a spring of action which reversed the conditions. His affections and will were concentrated on a Person. His eyes were fixed on the future with unquenchable hope. He had Someone whom it was his joy to serve. To be good was no longer a harsh and difficult obedience, but a glad response to the appeal of the highest he had seen: no longer an acquiescence in the world, but an effort to turn it into the Kingdom of God. That was the great achievement of the gospel in the moral sphere, and the cause of its deepest appeal. It invested the ethical life with the colours of adventure. It showed men a new way of being good.

3. All these things happened long ago. We may wonder whether they have any significance for us. The gospel came into a world which in most places consciously needed salvation. But do we? The concern with sin which formed the background of Paul's consciousness is not familiar to us. And if the sense of sin is absent where can the promise of salvation lay hold of us?

Is not the truth in this matter that the need of salvation remains, but its symptoms change from age to age? The form of the need has altered, but the need remains. The psychologists have divided human beings into two classes, introverts and extroverts. Whereas the men of former days were largely introverts, we are mostly extroverts. The world outside has grown so complex and its changes are so manifold and its demands so pressing that we tend to live entirely in them. We do not know our sins because we do not know ourselves. We are better informed, but more shallow than our forefathers. And therefore our need of salvation presents itself in a different form. No longer does it rise from a conscious disgust with ourselves, but in a more superficial way—a sense of futility. That is our symptom—a sense of the futility of life. It is written in the literature of the day. It is reflected in the social confusion which mirrors the confusion of the souls who compose society. What is really worth doing? If we could agree about that, the problems which now press upon us in a confused mass would assume some order of

[1] John S. Whale, *Facing the Facts*, 82.

importance. Society, and the individuals who compose it, are masterless, without a common point of effort. If we do not feel our need for salvation from sin we feel the need for the salvation from futility.

¶ Canon Peter Green quotes these words from a letter which he received from a university student: 'I do not know what we are in this world for. There is nothing I want to be or to do. Life is futile. I am futile.'

¶ There is a symbol of this modern sense of futility in the account of the Marabar Caves in Forster's *A Passage to India*, around which the action of the novel centres. The most remarkable thing about these caves was the terrifying echo. 'Whatever is said, the same monotonous noise replies . . . utterly dull,' and utterly meaningless. 'Pathos, piety, courage—they exist, but are identical, and so is filth.' All comes to the same thing—the echo answers *ou-boum*, *bou-oum*. Nothing has any value, nothing has any meaning.[1]

How shall the masterless man, who is the futile man, find a master? We say, perhaps, that we doubt the Christian theology, we are perplexed by the doctrines of the New Testament. But does that matter? Is that the main point? As we saw, Paul did not come to his salvation through theology, but through the response of his personality to an ideal; he found a leader, not a creed. That is the way in which the modern man must come to vital Christianity. Pascal presented the practical decision for religion under the form of a wager. Suppose there is only a chance that Christianity is true, it is worth while to take that chance, for you stand to lose little and to gain infinitely. His way of putting it was open to question, because it seemed to require the sacrifice of the intellect. But we can put the thought in another and better way. Suppose the Christian creed is possibly illusion. Suppose that what the Church has believed about Jesus is false, that He perished for ever on Calvary. Yet His ideal and His idea of God's Kingdom is still worth following. Even though we shall at the end be crushed by an indifferent universe, we shall have saved our lives from futility; we shall have filled them with a high purpose and infused them with the spirit of adventure and hope.

But that is not the way it will work. The life of Paul and countless others stand as witness that they who take Christ as Master grow day by day in the confidence that He is revealer of reality. They find that the following of Jesus is not the way to destruction but to the heart and meaning of the world. The just shall live by faith: but at the end they shall know whom they have believed.

¶ John Keats, while still a lad, came upon a copy of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Before he had finished reading the poem he knew quite clearly what he must be and do. He had glimpsed a new world, looked into a realm of beauty and light he had never seen before. When he first took up that book he had not a single aim in life. When he put it down, he knew where his destiny lay. He was called to be a poet. And there have been many who, taking into their hand another Book, have heard through its pages One speaking 'with man's voice by the marvellous sea,' and have followed Him. All such have discovered that only in Christ's fellowship and service could they come to terms with life.[1]

[1] T. Tudor Rhys.

[1] W. Francis Gibbons, *The Heart of Religion*, 25.

The Gospel of Democracy

Gal. iii. 28.—'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'

THIS great utterance of St Paul proclaims the absolute democracy of the Kingdom of God which takes practical form in the catholicity of the Church. This is the essential spirit of the Gospel and the true attitude of the Church and of every Christian towards all social and industrial questions, and towards the classes into which society is divided.

1. Let us look at the world to which these great words were first spoken. It was a world rigidly stratified by the horizontal distinctions of caste and class and partitioned off by the perpendicular walls of race and nationality; there was no sense of a common humanity. There was the distinction of races; the Romans had one word for foreigner and enemy. All the world was divided into two portions, *cives et hostes*; citizens of Rome and enemies. There was the distinction of culture; the artistic, philosophical, and literary Greeks lumped all

other peoples together under the one indiscriminate and contemptuous title of 'barbarians.' There were the distinctions of religion. The Hebrew recognized only two divisions of humanity—the children of Abraham and of God on the one side and the 'dogs of Gentiles' on the other. There were the distinctions of sex. In almost all the nations the position of woman was one of marked inferiority. There was the distinction of employment and function in society; the working-men of Greece and Rome were almost all slaves. As slaves they were simply the tools of production; things to handle and use. And even among those of the same race and religion there were castes of social or religious superiority which permitted of no interchange of sympathy or human feeling. Here and there a nobler soul had a glimpse of a higher vision, as when the Roman satirist sang, 'Nothing human do I count alien from myself.' But even a Plato and an Aristotle acquiesced in the common view which regarded the working-man as practically outside the boundaries of a common humanity, and therefore having no human rights.

Into this stratified and divided world came the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And the first thing it did was to proclaim a common humanity and a universal brotherhood of man under the universal Fatherhood of God. With that proclamation it set to work to level all walls and tear down all partitions that divided any man from any other man. It said to the warring nations, 'God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the whole earth.' It said to the contending religions, 'There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek or the Gentile, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' It said to the slave, 'Thou art Christ's freeman'; it said to the master, 'Thou art Christ's bond-servant and to Him thou shalt give account.' It did not directly attack any outward institution such as slavery, but it undermined the foundations of such institutions with its new spirit of democracy, its new proclamation of equality before God, of universal brotherhood in Christ.

¶ Christianity for a long time hid its levelling power in the very excess of an idealism, which treated worldly distinctions indifferent, and *therefore* allowed them to exist. But by treating all such distinctions as accidental differences of outward position which a few years must terminate, and by disregarding them in the order of the church, it spread through all the nations which it reached a consciousness of the infinite value of each individual soul and of the comparative unimportance of the things that in this world divide man from, or set him above, another.[1]

And so the Christian Church at first, at least, was an absolutely democratic society. As we have said, the democracy of the Kingdom of God took practical form in the catholicity of the Church. Its principle is well expressed by the philosopher, Kant: 'Treat no man as a means, but always as an end.' That is, never take hold of him simply by his function, position, or employment as an instrument and tool to serve your purposes, but take him by the hand as a man and a brother.

2. Now here lies the primary mission of the Church and the first duty of the Christian in the midst of our social and industrial strife; namely, to realize the democracy of the Kingdom of God and the brotherhood of all men in Christ Jesus. There are other things to be done. There are economic, industrial, and political reforms that must be carried out. The Church must stand stoutly for economic and industrial justice and equity, for a fair division of wealth, and, above all, for equality of opportunity for every son of man. It is an essential part of our religion to take vital interest, and an active, efficient part in every righteous movement towards that end.

But there is a deeper duty than that. As Christians, whether as a Church or as individual followers of Christ, we are concerned primarily not with policies of social reform, but with principles of social justice and righteousness; not with methods of economic or industrial procedure, but with the motives of brotherly love. As Dr Peabody remarks, 'The characteristics of Christ's treatment of all such questions are first, the vision from above, and second, the approach from within.' These must also be the characteristics of the Christian's treatment of such questions to-day. The Church and the Christian faith are to furnish the mind, the heart, and the conscience which alone can inspire any effective reform or furnish a spring

[1] E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion.*

of action to any vital movement for righteousness and social justice.

¶ The Church has an onerous duty in each generation to explore God's whole will for that day, boldly to set it forth in her teaching and embody it in her corporate life. But men, whether as individuals or in groups, are not ready to learn the will of God, nor are they in the least likely to try to obey it, until His grace in Christ has gripped them and drawn them into forgiven oneness with Him. When that occurs, the resources of His Spirit are released in and through them. Such Spirit-filled Christians bridge social chasms, tear down barriers of race, and seek to establish economic justice and honourable relations between all men.[1]

3. It is the business, the great social duty, of the Church and Christian people to-day to expand the heart, to enlarge the sympathies, until they shall take in all that is human; to refuse to be bound by any limitations of class or caste, any accidents of position, possession, or occupation, and to treat all men simply as men.

That is what Christ did. He was not the rich man's friend. He was not the poor man's friend. But he was the friend of man as he was the Son of Man. He did not stand for labour. He did not stand for capital. He stood for humanity. He insisted upon treating men and ministering to men, never according to the accidents of their peculiar positions, possessions, or functions in society, but simply and always according to the essence of their common humanity. He was to be found now at the ultra-respectable and religious Pharisee's reception and again at the wealthy but godless publican's table. And thereby He doubtless would have incurred unpopularity among the labour-unions of Jerusalem if there had been any labour-unions in that day. Now He was at the simple home of the Galilean peasant and fisherman, and again among the despised outcasts, and the sinners. And thereby He did incur the enmity of the rich and respectable and the religious, the aristocracy of His day, and that enmity brought Him to His cross. But He never hesitated. He mingled freely with them all upon the broad and simple basis of a common humanity. To Him a man was always a man and nothing more—and what is better, always nothing less.

[1] H. S. Coffin, *God Confronts Man in History*, 111.

So must every Christian man or woman do who would follow Christ. So must every Christian minister do who would preach Christ. So, above all, must the Christian Church do if she would be true to her commission and her Master.

¶ My father was a working-man, and while no man could have been freer from any kind of self-assertion, I am certain it would have seemed very queer to him to be regarded *in the Church* as belonging to a particular class which had to be recognized in some particular way. With all our faults, the self-respecting working-man can keep his self-respect, and be at home in our Church as completely, I believe, as in the apostolic age. I had rich merchants, secretaries of financial companies, schoolmasters, shopkeepers, tradesmen, and coachmen in my session, and we were as true a brotherhood in Christ as a minister could wish to have part in.[1]

¶ When that mighty seer and prophet, Henry George, was engaged in his last great fight, the campaign for the mayoralty of New York, he was called upon one night to address a mass meeting of working-men in the Cooper Institute. The chairman of the meeting, an astute political manager, introduced him in glowing terms as 'the friend of the working-man.' As soon as Mr George rose to his feet, he said emphatically and slowly, 'I am not the friend of the working-man.' There was an instant of strained silence throughout the building; consternation was visible on the faces of the managers on the platform and an ominous look of bewilderment on the faces of the vast audience. The speaker went on, 'I am not the friend of the capitalist.' There was a palpable sense of relief, but still the audience waited for the final word, and it came. The speaker added slowly and distinctly, 'I am for men, men simply as men, regardless of any accidental or superficial distinctions of race, creed, colour, class, or yet function or employment.' [2]

St Paul's View of Womanhood

Gal. iii. 28.—'There can be no male and female: for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus' (R.V.).

MANY women, and those not the least thoughtful or devout, are in a chronic attitude of protest

[1] *Letters of Principal James Denney to W. Robertson Nicoll*, 107.

[2] C. D. Williams, *A Valid Christianity for To-day*, 165.

against what they believe to be St Paul's unworthy view of womanhood. Their case might, perhaps, be stated in this way. 'In this famous verse the Apostle does indeed offer eloquent lip-service to the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. But when we compare this abstract aspiration with the practical rules which he lays down elsewhere, we find a contradiction. His recognition of fraternity among all races of men does not prevent him from answering the question, 'What advantage hath the Jew?' with the claim 'Much every way.' His belief in liberty does not forbid him to send the slave Onesimus back to his master, nor to advise other slaves to decline the offer of emancipation. And the ideal equality which he admits between the sexes, when translated into precepts, proves to be a complete subordination of woman in action, in speech, and even in thought. When Christians meet for worship, he bids woman to cover her head and be silent. When they are at home, he bids the wife ask her husband for instruction and obey his commands. When he speaks of marriage, he treats it as an inferior condition which men should avoid if they would lead the higher life. And when there is a question of sinful relations between the sexes, all his concern is for the harm done to the man's character, while he says not a word about the degradation of womanhood.

That is a serious indictment, and all the more serious because charges against the great Apostle are so apt to be transferred to the teaching of his Master. Christianity as a whole cannot but suffer discredit from a belief that its ideals for women fall below the best. We have then to deal with the question—how much truth is there in the charge against St Paul?

1. Christianity was not presented to the world as a social programme which must be established on the ruins of the existing order, but as a spirit which must gradually leaven society. When Paul refused to bring the infant Church into conflict with what were considered the pillars of society he saved the faith from being crushed as a spirit of revolution in order that it might triumph as a spirit of transfiguring progress. So he held fast to the practical in public life while he taught his converts to recognize the ideal in their relations to each other as members of Christ. In Christ—that is, among members of a perfectly Christian body—inequalities disappear. Inequalities of value, not differences of function. The Apostle never identifies Jew and Greek. He insists upon their real differences in nature and operation, but he asserts that the mystery of the ages is their equality in worth and privilege. Neither did he identify bond and free. On the contrary, he insisted upon the mutual duties of master and slave, and did not dream that slavery could ever be abolished. Yet, he says in the text, master and slave are equal in the Church of Christ. Value is independent of status. The immortal soul of the slave has the same infinite worth as that of his master. Neither does he mean by the words of the text—'there is neither male nor female'—to deny the fundamental differences between man and woman. No matter what may be the conventions of social order at any given time, woman's equality in personal worth is affirmed.

2. Here we meet with an objection. In maintaining the temporary subordination of the Gentile or the slave, it will be said, Paul rested all the weight upon the social order; he wrote no word which could derogate from their spiritual equality with other men. In the case of women it is otherwise. The submission which he requires of them is grounded not upon external conditions but upon an assumed inferiority of nature. So, while changes of social order have allowed the Gentile and the slave to claim and enjoy the equal rights of Christian manhood, the Apostle's great authority has withheld the Church from granting a like emancipation to women.

It must be admitted that, besides a few definite statements, the tone of long passages lends no little support to this contention. Yet we believe the view of St Paul which is based upon them to be mistaken. No man can be a successful reformer who is not largely in sympathy with his own generation. He must share not merely their reasoned knowledge, but in some degree their prejudices and their ignorance. Consider for a moment the influences under which Paul's earlier opinion of women was formed. As he tells us himself, he was by tradition and training a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Among the Jews women held, it is true, a better position than in other Oriental nations. They enjoyed greater freedom and greater respect. Yet St John's Gospel records

how the disciples wondered that Jesus conversed with a woman at the well of Samaria. And one of the thanksgivings which men repeated in the regular service of the synagogue was 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast not made me a woman.'

The other main influence upon St Paul's thought was that of the Greeks. Now, in the golden age of Athenian democracy, Socrates is reported to have asked a typical Athenian husband, 'Is there any one with whom you are less in the habit of conversing than with your wife?' and to have received the answer 'No.' In fact all serious conversation was between men. Greek women were either drudges or toys, and in either case were treated as inferior beings. Socrates endeavoured to make men sympathize with their wives about household cares and educate them by kindly talk. But even Socrates never dreamed of such union as is happily common in modern Christian homes, where the wife shares all her husband's best thought and activity. No Greek and no Jew of the ancient world imagined that the secrets of a perfect friendship, equality made vivid by difference, sympathy in deepest thought, and harmony in highest aspiration could ever be the possession of man and wife.

¶ Mrs V. Pandit, the present Ambassador of India to the United States, was with her two daughters when a man got out of a bus, put up his umbrella, walked ahead with his wife behind with a baby astride her hips and a bundle on her head. 'Look Mother, what's that?' asked one of the girls. 'That's India,' quietly replied the mother. The younger said: 'Well, if I were in her place I'd give him the baby and the bundle, and I'd take the umbrella and walk ahead of him'—that was the young radical. The older daughter said: 'I wouldn't. I would give him the bundle, and I'd walk alongside of him under the umbrella with my baby'—that was the young liberal. But that isn't India alone—that was the whole ancient world.[1]

These two general causes were supplemented by a third, which was personal. St Paul was never married. His life in Jerusalem, from an early age, was that of the student, the teacher, the man of affairs. His life as an Apostle was that of a wanderer who entered many men's houses but nowhere made a home. His converts were adults, and with their relations he was chiefly concerned. Of children he rarely speaks, and he says nothing from which we could infer that he realized the glory and privilege of motherhood, which gives woman a power in the world at least equal to that of man.

Remembering the control which tradition and environment exercise over the most original minds, how can we wonder that the Apostle's conception of womanhood often declined from the high standard assumed in the text? The wonder is rather that, even at the lowest, he stood so far above the ordinary level of his age and nation. Consider what his brother Rabbis must have thought of the eloquent and learned teacher who reckoned many women among his friends, who allowed them to play an important part in some of his infant communities, and even compared the relation between man and wife to that between Christ and His Church. To them he must have seemed a dangerous revolutionary, undermining the foundations of the social fabric. Only by taking their point of view can we judge him fairly, for only thus can we see how far he had advanced beyond them.

St Paul was a first-century Jew, and as such influenced by the spirit of his times; but he was above all a follower of Jesus Christ. When he affirmed the essential equality of men and women, he was only putting into words that which his Master plainly taught by His life. In the eyes of Jesus every human soul alike is of inestimable worth, apart from circumstance, condition, or estimation. Age, sex, and race are as dust in the balance which weighs infinity and eternity. Therefore in the Kingdom of Heaven man and woman are of equal account.

3. Unhappily, St Paul's less enlightened sayings have generally prevailed in the Church to maintain the subordination of women. There has, indeed, always been some progress. A new impulse was given when Teutonic chivalry blended with the true Christian teaching to produce such an ideal as we find in Dante. Yet average opinion was but slightly leavened, and the early nineteenth century reckoned ignorance, dependence, and unreason among the proper attributes of womanhood.

Think what an opportunity was missed! Had the Church risen to the height of her

[1] E. Stanley Jones, *The Way to Power and Poise*, 88.

social mission, she would have taught the world to recognize the rights of women, and would have found for them an equal sphere in which their special gifts would have scope. Even now it is not too late for her to correct the errors and atone for the negligence of the past. It is never too late for the Christian Church to follow the example of Christ. In recent years, indeed, the Church of England has done something in this direction. She has given recognition to the saintly and devoted women who do the hardest and roughest work of reclamation, but she has not granted them either the maintenance or the status which are freely given to men. She has revived the Order of Deaconesses, and so recognized the ministerial gifts of women. No large reform, however, can be made except through a permanent system by which the talents and devotion of women may be not merely exploited but recognized, by which their spiritual insight and loving wisdom may exercise a regular influence upon the councils and policy of the Church.

¶ 'Apart from the established usage of the Church, I cannot see,' says Bishop Welldon,[1] that there can be any ultimate objection to the ordination of women. Women have always been the more religious of the two sexes; they have made valuable contributions to religious literature—perhaps, above all, to hymnology. It is evident that a woman is better qualified than a man could be to offer counsel to women upon many points affecting womanhood. Women are already beginning to be ordained in some of the more liberal Churches outside the Church of England, and I can feel little doubt that they will be, soon or late, ordained within the Church. There are women whose whole nature qualifies them for a spiritual ministry. They will be able to render service in some respects better than men can render it.'

God's Patience

Gal. iv. 4.—'And when the time was fully come.'

For even God must wait until it does. And He does wait with an awful patience, which is our one hope, yet which has something fearsome in its persistency that will not give nor break.

To us the mark of the Divine is suddenness. God speaks, and it is done. He wills, and His desire grows into fact. For He is the Almighty with whom will and power are one. The sickening heave of the earthquake transforming a whole landscape in one tremendous moment, tumbling men's proudest works into a ruinous heap; the fierce, vindictive scribble of the lightning, tearing the sky open; the rattle and crash of the thunder; these are the things that make us hold our breath, feeling that God is very near, is here. And sometimes God does work through cataclysm and upheaval. But usually He does not shatter His way to an immediacy of result, but slowly, gradually, imperceptibly feels His way to His far ends.

1. Consider what Paul tells us here. From all eternity God had it in His heart to give us Jesus Christ. Long before time began He had thought out that 'unspeakable gift' for us. Yet still He kept it back. Other mighty benefits He heaped on us—prophets, revelations, new understandings of God and life and man—glorious things showered upon us unstintedly. But that greatest of all He still held in His hand, till men had grown up enough to feel their need of it, and see the glory of the life in Christ, and thrill to the adventure to which we are called in Him. And only then, when the time had fully come, did Christ appear.

And what heartens us is, that the day of all days which He chose out as the best possible, as the appointed time for the new inrush of spiritual life and understanding which Christ brought, was an age curiously like our own. Then, as now, people were disillusioned, and desperate; had found life was too difficult for them by far: then, as now, the foundations of life, the axioms of human conduct slowly built up out of the hard-won experience of many generations, were being impudently challenged; then, as now, the accredited religion seemed to have completely failed, and men were casting it aside as a thing outworn and of no further use, and were eagerly trying out anything and everything that offered itself to them as a possible substitute; and, then as now, God seemed to many markedly less real and near and effective than other older generations had found Him in their day. And it was then, in such a storm-tossed, heart-sick, desperate day that at long last Christ came.

Is that the meaning of it all? Has God, in His great mercy been shepherding us into this

[1] *Forty Years On*, 213.

narrow place so that, with our pride broken and our need of Him made clear to us, we may at last be willing to accept from Him with humble gratitude what He has all along been offering us, and we have haughtily refused ?

True, there is another view. Voices of moment, even in the Church, keep telling us that we can't expect any outstanding spiritual happenings in a world like ours. How can there be, they ask ? Put yourself in the place of millions of your fellows, with some imagination and some acuteness of sympathy. Think of the life that meets them every morning ; of their heads bent over some mechanical task-work that converts them, for hours every day, into mere living automata : or of the struggle to make ends meet ; and to provide enough for those whom God has given them. You must alter the social system—lock and stock and barrel ; you must give them some kind of chance, and then they may have time to lift their heads and see the stars, and remember the big things that matter, but which meantime are, almost of necessity, crowded out of minds harassed and anxious about many things to which they must attend. As things are, it is hopeless to expect much interest in spiritual matters.

Ask the prophets what they think of that reading of life, and they will laugh at you ; will tell you that it is just when things are darkest and most desperate that men need God the most, and then that they watch for Him most hopefully, waiting expectantly on tiptoe and with eager hearts, certain that He is sure to come, because we need Him so. Ask Jesus Christ Himself, and He will answer that it is not even the east end with its pressing and clamant economic problems, but the west end with its enervating comforts which is the real danger spot, where souls are likeliest to be lost. Ask many of us, and we will tell you that it was out upon the perilous edge of things, where the winds cut and whistle cruelly, and the footing is precarious, that we have been nearest to God, and surest of His presence with us.

All which, they tell us with contempt, is merely childish wishful thinking. Because life is too difficult for us, we wish there were a Father, and at last fool ourselves, poor self-deluded dupes, into imagining there is a Father, though, of course, there is really nothing there. The answer to all which is the only honest, and the only scientific one—try you it for yourself, and you will find it is no dream but solid, palpable, demonstrated fact ; that a hand, invisible but strong and watchful, does steady : and a voice inaudible to the ears indeed, yet quick to speak, urgent and very wise, does guide.

¶ 'If you ask me,' confesses Unamuno, the Spanish philosopher, 'how I believe in God, how God creates Himself in me, and reveals Himself to me, my answer may perhaps provoke your smiles or laughter, and even scandalize you. I believe in God as I believe in my friends, because I feel the breath of His affection, feel His invisible and intangible hand, drawing me, leading me, grasping me.'

2. Or, how often you have heard this offer of a Saviour. And how often has your heart remained entirely unexcited. Saviour from what ? I am content enough with what I am ; and any matters that need rectifying I myself must right, and can right. So you have felt, and said, and pushed the gospel from you, as insulting. But to-day, looking out over a world tumbled in ruins, at all the day-dreams of a generation turned into mocking faces and to jeering voices that hoot at us, and our proud boasts of what the earth was going to see now that at last a generation had appeared with some idealism and some grit and purposefulness to arise and work it out—beaten, humbled, disillusionized, are we ready now to lay help upon One mightier than ourselves by far ; ready to hail a Saviour who can save, where we ourselves have failed ? Horace, talking of the wise construction of a poem, tells us that a god should never be called in unless the case is desperate. Look at the world ! Is it not desperate indeed ? Can any one but God meet such colossal needs and sinfulness ? Are we ready, at length, to call Him in, and try His plan for us ? Has the time fully come—at last ?

3. There is this, too, to be said, with awe and bewilderment, that it is not of Christ alone, but of all of us that it is true to say that it was when the time had fully come that God sent each of us to the appointed lot to which He had assigned us, and to the work for which He had created us. The fact that we are here at all is proof that God has need of us. Our work only we can do, and we were made to do it. 'His enterprise

was not a plot of two years or of twenty years,' says Emerson about John Brown, that lover of the slaves, 'but the keeping of an oath made to heaven and earth forty-seven years before. Forty-seven years at least—though I incline to accept his own account of the matter which makes the date a little older, when he said, "This was all settled millions of years before the world was made."' We, too, were thought out by Almighty God from all eternity as the likeliest of all possible creatures to do that work He needs from us.

¶ 'Since this is my duty,' says Royce, 'nothing else in the universe—no, not God, in so far as God is other than myself—can do this duty for me. My duty I must myself do.'

Yet what, in point of fact, are we doing with our lives? What would you like to do with yours? Oh, you say, just the usual little things. I would wish to push on a bit in life, to have some measure of success in it, to make a home, and something over, for my dear ones, to win, if that may be, a little leisure for myself before the end.

All worthy dreams and goals! But do you think that their fulfilment would be a sufficient explanation of your being? Would God have created you only for that? The poet who wrote the 119th Psalm tells us that, watching the mighty drama always being enacted before his fascinated eyes, and seeing how the seasons follow one another, and the flowers know their appointed times, and the constellations move in a majestic and orderly procession through the heavens, and all things punctually play their part—and only he was out of it, a little, fussy, independent state, he felt lonesome and lost, an alien in this universe in which everything else was helping on the plan, felt that he also must come underneath the scheme, and work out his part of it too. If we are ever to do that, we had better set about it.

Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note may yet be done.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Not yet too late. But, certainly for us, the time has fully come.

God's Invasion of Time

Gal. iv. 4, 5.—'But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.'

With these words St Paul strikes at the very heart of the Christmas message, and lays bare its meaning as the intervention of God in our human life. Christmas joy and faith are built upon the fact that now God is with us—Emmanuel! No longer is God removed from us by the distance of sin or by the exaltedness of His Divine majesty. He is a God who has come right into our human midst and is to be found just where Jesus is to be found. If therefore we would trace the ways of God among men we must begin where Jesus began, in a human home, in the tender relations of human love, for Christmas tells us that it is there above all that God is present.

1. In order to describe this intervention among men St Paul uses two expressions which are true of every man and woman, 'made of a woman,' and 'made under the law.' It is primarily about God's intervention described in those terms that we are to think. They gather up the whole message of the gospel, and speak of the work of God's love both in regard to our humanity, and in regard to our inhumanity.

(1) '*Made of a woman.*' The birth of the Son of God at Bethlehem means the intervening of God's love in our human home in all its deep humanity, into the tender relations between mother and child, and husband and wife, into our human poverty and hardship, into the deeper love-bonds forged by struggle and difficulty in a world too often unkind. That is the story of Christmas, and it is because that is the story that Christmas joy is so unbounded and ineffable. Above all the Christmas spirit is the hallowing of our home life, the consecration of the joy of children, and the exaltation of family affection because God in Christ Jesus has come into our midst and dwells in our homes. There is now no element of our human life with which God is not intimately in touch in Jesus Christ, and no human experience of joy or sorrow, of pain or health, of trouble and anxiety or love and peace that need remain untouched by the love that has intervened in

Jesus. Now that God has come in Jesus, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, He is to be found where we are found, where Jesus Christ Himself encounters us in the heart of our humanity.

(2) '*Made under the law.*' That means the invasion of the love of God into the heart of our inhumanity as well. Law is always the element of inhumanity with which we have to struggle, for it is the element that is impersonal, and that transmutes by rules and regulations the personal relations of love into impersonal relations from which love has disappeared. No doubt it is really sin that is the inhuman element, for sin always dehumanizes us; it destroys our true humanity, and depersonalizes us. But just because the law has to deal with sin, control it and keep it within bounds, law partakes of the inhumanity of sin, it deals with man in his isolation from the love of God and from the love of his fellows.

When St Luke began his account of the birth of Jesus he wrote: 'And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.' No exceptions were allowed to that rule, and moreover it was stipulated that every one should be taxed in his home town or village, wherever the family burial ground was to be found. And what a commotion that created in the world! Men and women began hastening back to their old homes in great confusion. When the decree was made known to Mary and Joseph in Nazareth there was nothing to be done about it but to obey. Hastily they packed up their goods, and putting Mary upon a donkey Joseph led her gently over the hills of Nazareth to the hills of Judæa—was there ever a more potent picture of the inhumanity of the law? And yet the Christmas message is the intervention of Divine love into the heart of that inhumanity, and means the bending of inhumanity to serve the purpose of God's infinite love; the guiding of the inhuman elements of our world in order to make all things work together for good.

That is also the joy of Christmas, and great joy it is: God intervening into the heart of human inhumanity for the purpose of love and salvation. It is like the story of a man falling heir to a bankrupt business with all its terribly inhuman elements, under the constant and dread threat of the law, and yet carrying on, and, without incurring debt himself, restoring the whole situation even in the teeth of the law. That is the meaning of the entry of the Son of God into our humanity, into our inhumanity at Bethlehem.

2. But the contrast between 'made of a woman' and 'made under the law' is much profounder than that. There are two great signs that God has given us which enclose between them the love and passion of Jesus. On the one hand there is the *Virgin Birth*, and on the other hand there is the *Resurrection from the dead*. They are real signs that tell us something of the amazing purpose of the love of God and reveal to us as nothing else the kind of intervention that Christmas means.

(1) The *Virgin Birth* means the invasion of God's love from above, from outside our world. It means that Jesus the Saviour of the world could not be produced by humanity, that men cannot save themselves by their own effort or by their co-operation with one another, or even by their co-operation with God. The miraculous birth of Jesus means the intervention of Divine love plumb down from above, from beyond human possibility, and yet into the very heart of humanity and inhumanity. The story of human history is the story of evolution, and the theme of evolution in history is the survival of the fittest. But the story of Christmas is the story of the invasion of God's love and power from without into the heart of history, and the theme of that story is not the survival of the fit, but the survival of the unfit. 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins'—and so Jesus came not to the whole but to the sick, to seek and to save that which was lost. That is the breath-taking fact that lies behind the event of Bethlehem: the story of love breaking into the midst of human life and history in order to save men who are needy and helpless to save themselves—salvation rooted and grounded in the sheer intervention of God's infinite love.

(2) If the *Virgin Birth* means the invasion of our humanity by the love of God, the *Resurrection* means the intervention of God's love in our inhumanity. Here we have one who was 'made under the law,' who has entered into the heart of what St Paul called our human curse, who allowed Himself to be bound hand and foot by the enslavement of sin and the judgments of sin, but here is One who could

not be holden by the bands of law, but tore them asunder and rose from the dead. The tragedy of law is that while it expresses the Divine will, yet when man applies law to bound the work of sin, and employs taxation and rules and regulations in order to plan society and control its inner destructive impulses, the more men lose their freedom, and the more they become enslaved. Law is used only for good purposes, but the more law is used the more intolerable becomes the enslaved condition of men, and human freedom disappears. It is right into the heart of that tragic situation that the Divine love has intervened in Jesus, 'made under the law,' into the heart of our enslavement in order to break its iron bands and bring us freedom and the liberty of the children of God.

Recall for a moment the Old Testament story of Samson the mighty man of valour who was bound hand and foot with cords but who snapped them in a trice as if they were but flimsy things — but behold a greater than Samson is here. Recall too how one day the Philistines found Samson within a walled city, and how they barred and made fast the huge gates, and how he tore them from their hinges and broke a way out into freedom—and behold a greater than Samson is here. Jesus Christ is the Son of God who has come into our inhumanity, allowed Himself to be bound hand and foot by its enslavement, the enslavement of sin and law—they even crucified Him, locked Him up in a tomb, and sealed it with the seal of the law of the land. But He hurled the stone away, He tore the bands of death and law asunder. He rose from the dead. 'Made under the law,' but He could not be imprisoned by law. And just because He rose from the dead the Resurrection means the intervention of God's love in our law-ridden inhumanity, and the achievement of freedom for all who follow Him and believe. 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.' Jesus was born at Bethlehem for that purpose—to be the mighty Saviour of men, bringing freedom from sin and law and guilt and death. Emmanuel: God with us in the heart of our inhumanity: God and sinners reconciled!

And so St Paul goes on to say that the message of Christmas means that God's intervention makes us the free children of God. We were once, he says, like Roman children brought up under the stern tutelage of a schoolmaster. But just as those children had no rights, and no freedom but were subject to the discipline of their slave-pedagogue until they attained their majority when they gained the freedom of sons and citizens, so we who believe in Christ Jesus are freed from the enslavement of the law and become sons of the living God. 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.' Enter into your wonderful inheritance in Christ: the inheritance of freedom, for he who believes in Jesus Christ, born at Bethlehem, risen again from the dead, overcometh the world! No longer need we be slaves to all the inhuman elements of our life; through the Christ of Christmas and the Christ of Easter we are on top of the world!

3. That is what St Paul calls *the fulness of time.* Until Bethlehem time was empty, full of disappointments, and deceptions, and vanity. Its purposes were never fulfilled. Somehow time never matured, it just passed and passed and passed in endless monotonous duration, just as it still does for those who do not believe in Christ Jesus. But now that Christ has intervened into the midst of time, there is a *new ingredient* in time which makes all the difference. It is the breaking in of that new ingredient that makes the joy of Christmastide —and there is no joy like it. Time was when all the hopes and aspirations of men flowered for a while but only to wither and perish like the grass of the field, but now that time is filled with this new ingredient through the invasion of the love of God—time is different. Now the hopes and aspirations of the years, now the holy desires and lovely expectations reach out and find their fulfilment in Christ Himself. No matter what happens in time, no matter how much inhumanity it holds within its embrace, God has invaded that inhumanity and His mighty love now controls and masters all time so that He makes it all bend to the purpose of His infinite love, and all things are made to work together for good to them that love God.

The Chinese have an illustration which may help us here. They remind us that in a cart-wheel all the spokes are made to converge upon the centre, but if they actually converged the wheel would be useless and meaningless. It is only when an axis runs clean through the centre at right-angles to the spokes that man can get

purchase upon the circumference and use the wheel. Is that not what has happened to time and history at the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ? Until Bethlehem all the lines converged in vanity, but now that a hole has been knocked clean through the world in the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection, now that the lines of necessity no longer converge at some unmeaning point, now that infinite love has broken into our humanity and broken through our inhumanity, the world can have meaning, for it has a purpose of infinite love running through it. Now all history is reckoned by the decisive event that has split history in two, B.C. and A.D., and he who believes in Jesus may redeem the time. This is the axis which makes the world go round, this is the stupendous fact which makes all things to work together for good, two gaping holes in the hard iron necessity of our fallen world, the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection, and between them the amazing love of Christ and the holy passion of Calvary. That is the amazing intervention of God's love upon which we base our faith and pin our hope and ground our ineffable joy: God with us in the midst of time, reconciling the world unto Himself, time filled with the power and love of God, time filled with Jesus Christ in whom all things cohere, and in whom all lines converge, time maturing at last into infinite love and peace and joy.

T. F. Torrance.

The Two Incarnations

Gal. iv. 4–6.—'When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.'

Disentangling the root-idea in this passage from its temporary environment, we have here a statement of the essential gospel of Jesus Christ for mankind. It was a message realized in a double Incarnation, both historic, both spiritual, both life-giving. There was, first, the 'sending forth' of God's son in Jesus of Nazareth, 'made of a woman, made under the law,' limited, that is, by the narrow bounds of our humanity, and by the narrower bounds of time and place and particular circumstance. There was, secondly, the sending forth of the 'Spirit of God's Son,' into the hearts of His people—a reincarnation on a wider and ampler scale of His power and life, still within the boundaries of humanity, but not limited to one particular manifestation in time and place; on the other hand, a vital spiritual force capable of manifesting itself everywhere and through all time.

According to St Paul here, the first Incarnation mainly had a backward look, it was a fulfilment and a consummation of the long historical process of the past and the end of all previous history; but the second Incarnation had a forward look, it was a fresh start in the evolution of the race, a new realization of larger and higher spiritual possibilities, the promise 'of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

1. The first Incarnation: 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,' or, to parallel the same thought as expressed by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'for he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.'

What, in simple terms, does this mean but that when God gave His supreme revelation of His own essential nature in its relation to humanity, He came not as an alien to our planet, but as a native? Not in angelic form, robed in the brightness of a faraway mystery, did He come, but as a Man, as a definite individual, along a recognized line of descent, one of the common people, a Hebrew of the first century. What to Paul was the outstanding and amazing mystery of the Incarnation was that there should be so little outward mystery about it; and the deeper wonder of it was that through its common, everyday human aspect there shone forth from the heart of it an inner mystery of quickening light and power that made life glorious for all who accepted it as God's truth for them.

'The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'—that is Christianity. It is a gospel of personality; God shining in upon us through the countenance of One who is bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, and who also is one with God in the recesses of His spirit, so 'making of twain one,' that else were divided by a chasm no thought could bridge and no vision could span from our side.

And could there be any revelation more

effectual, moving, convincing? Could God, who is a Person, make Himself known to us who are persons, except in and through a personality? We live as persons in a world of persons; they touch us at more points, they affect us in more ways, and with greater intensity fit more closely into the faculties and powers of our own being, than anything else in the universe. Personality is the greatest fact we know; it is a fact raised to its highest terms. And as it is the highest fact of our experience, God could not have made Himself known to us adequately for our needs except through and in a personality. Thus it comes about that the greatest fact of history is 'Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God.'

And personality, as it is the greatest of facts, is also the greatest of forces. The world is moved by personality, and ultimately only by personality. Organization is powerful, and institutions are powerful; but the power in them comes from the persons who founded them, or who work through them. Christianity has a doctrine, and it has an organization, but the force of our religion is the Person at its heart, which gives vitality to its organization and reality to its doctrine. We are being reminded nowadays that the chief truths and doctrines of Christianity may be matched from other religions, and that the working concepts of the New Testament—the Kingdom of God, Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, the Christ—are all drawn from the theologic furniture of current Judaism. What of that? This circle of ideas were all dead or dormant till Jesus came; at His touch they flamed into life. They were transfigured; instead of being dead dogmas, they flashed into eternal truths—nay, He was at once seen to be the Truth which they dimly adumbrated, the reality and the power they faintly suggested.

It is this which explains what is called the self-assertion, or self-emphasis of Christ as a Teacher. This was why He appealed to men not to believe what He said, but to believe in Him. This was why He founded not a college of professors, but a school of disciples. This was why He said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' This was why He said, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' This was why He said, 'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself.' He attached men not to His doctrine but to Himself, because He was conscious that love to Himself, faith in Himself, service for Himself, was the condition of fruitful living and doing, as God's self-expression in humanity, distracted and perplexed as it is with error and sin.

¶ J. R. Seeley wrote a good many years ago, 'Others contributed to men some discovery and passed away. Christ's discovery, the discovery He contributed, was Himself. Therefore He laid claim persistently, with the calmness of entire conviction, in opposition to the whole religious world, in spite of the offence which His own followers conceived, to a domination more transcendent, more universal, more complete than the most delirious votary of glory ever aspired to in his dreams.'

2. Great and essential, however, as was the first Incarnation, when 'it pleased God to send forth his Son, born of a woman, made under the law,' it is but half of Christianity, and even the less vital half. The first Incarnation would have been stillborn but that it led to the second. 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father!' This was the real birthday of Christianity—when the risen and exalted Christ sent forth His Spirit into the hearts of His people and made them feel that, though in the unseen, He was still with them, nay, was henceforth in them, so that all true believers could say, as Paul boldly said of himself, 'I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.'

¶ Professor Percy Gardner says: 'He who came to earth as Jesus has dwelt there to our day as Christ. The Christian consciousness of our day is one with the consciousness which set apart the followers of Christ from the world from the day when the Apostles first realized that, though their Master was hidden from sight, He was with them unto the end of the world. And when contemporary Christians claim that they, like St Paul, have learned to live in communion with and in dependence on the heavenly Christ, we are bound to take their claim seriously.'

This is the ultimate fact of Christianity—the continuous and unbroken communication of Christ's own life to those whose faith has linked them to Him. Once more we come back to that wonder-working Personality—no longer embedded in history in a far-away century, but

perpetually creative in the souls of men—'the something behind Cross, Gospel, Church, Scriptures, doctrines, changed characters, social transformations,' from which stream out the forces that have made the world perpetually new!

How history has vindicated the self-emphasis of Christ! Read the Book of Acts and the Epistles, and see how the company of believers was gathered as units out of that scoffing, hurrying, reckless Roman world in the day of its greatest pride and tyranny, and was welded into a compact and organic Church under the spell of the personal love which He awoke. Read the story of Christianity through the ages, and see how amid the turbulent forces of history this pure stream flows as the hurrying Jordan is said to flow through the Sea of Galilee without mingling its waters. Always what has given life to religion is the magic of the name and love of Christ. The Church has often been corrupt, and still oftener weak and ailing, but that has always been when the love of Christ has waned in the hearts of His people, and when they have put His doctrine or His Church in the central place that belongs only to Himself. And when the Church has revived it has always been revived by the spell of His presence, and the answering power of His love in the hearts of believing men and women.

¶ 'In all the history of Christianity, whenever there has been a new emphasis upon Jesus,' says E. Stanley Jones, 'there has been a fresh outburst of vitality and virility.'

And is it not so in our own hearts? When have we felt best able to conquer sin, and do good without wearying? Has it not been when we were most conscious of Jesus Christ, of His love, His presence, His power and grace, in our life? When we have grown helpless, discontented, tired out, and useless, has it not been because we have for a time lost hold of Him, and gone our own way in our own strength? It is what He is, and what He can do for men, that makes His religion the potent thing it is. He makes God real, and heaven real, and the soul feels its own reality by the touch of His own living spirit.

Therefore let us live in the light of this great fact—that in Jesus Christ God has come to us, and spoken with us, and offered Himself for us and to us, that we may offer ourselves to Him, and so be filled with His fulness. Let its light shine on our daily path. Let its glory pierce our darkest moments. Let its grace meet all our need, and its hope brighten all our shadows. 'Great is the mystery' of religion, that God should become human; but greater is its inspiration, for its end is that 'man may become Divine.'

Son and Heir

Gal. iv. 7.—'Thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God' (R.V.).

THESE words sum up our position, and our prospects, as believers in God through Jesus Christ. It is the big view of life. It should help us to hold high our heads and to walk the world with a firmer tread.

The Apostle means every word. We are no longer servants or slaves, but sons and heirs of God through Jesus Christ. He is not swept off his feet by the intensity of his feelings. This sentiment is to be found again and again in all his writings, and it expresses not only his own considered verdict, but also his personal experience. He knew in whom he had believed, and he knew what this faith had done for him. It had given him new significance and new dignity, and he was anxious that all believers in Jesus Christ should share his experience.

1. Do we recognize ourselves as sons and heirs? That is the question raised by this great claim. More pertinently, perhaps, does the world recognize us as such? Are we not rather too apologetic about the faith delivered to the saints? Is there anything in our bearing, our poise, our impact upon our fellow-men that compels their awareness of our 'standing' in Christ Jesus?

'The whole of creation groaneth and travaileth together until now, waiting. . . .' For what? '*Waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.*' One might say that in these words Paul stated his doctrine of Evolution long before Darwin was born. The world will never be set free, never be lifted into new planes of life and liberty, and men will never lose the badges of their servitude, until the 'sons of God' show the true way to freedom.

2. Or it may be we have not recognized and claimed our kingdom. Neil Munro once wrote a sketch of a man who unexpectedly inherited

a great fortune. He was a poor man inured to hard, unremittent toil for which he received a miserable pittance. But either he could not, or would not realize the significance of the wonderful thing that had happened. He preferred to leave his new riches untouched and went on working hard, earning his eighteen shillings a week. Is not this a parable of many a Christian life ?

We need to recover a deep, abiding sense of the dignity and grandeur of our faith. An older generation of theologians had developed a fine art of logical analysis. They were accustomed to draw a distinction between our *standing* and our *state* as believers in Christ. Our *standing* is secure ! Nothing that we do can affect it. The Grace of God is involved and cannot be deflected or defeated. We are ' sons and heirs ' ! The trouble lies in our ' state.' Our sense of our relationship to God is defective. We have not realized that we are ' sons and heirs of God.' How can this be remedied ? How can the power and beauty of sonship be seen in us ?

(1) At least three things are necessary. The first is *reverence*. There can be no real sonship without it. Christianity is a family religion. Its characteristic terms are fatherhood and sonship. Now, in every true human family relationship reverence is necessary. We cannot truly love what we do not reverence. Again, we can be truly humble only in the presence of what we reverence. Were Plato alive, or Aristotle, and were they to compile for us a list of the virtues, one is almost persuaded they would head that list with reverence.

We do need to recover a deep sense of reverence for God. Our most holy faith has suffered, and is suffering still, from a too saccharine conception of God. Men and women have persuaded themselves, if some modern novelists are to be believed, that they can play fast and loose with the moral law, and that God, in His benevolent kindness, will overlook it. We are in real danger of losing sight of the majesty, the power, the holiness and unfathomableness of Almighty God. Is it not a strange paradox that whilst science is giving us a greatly enhanced conception of the physical universe, the concept of God is in danger of eclipse ? Surely the one implies the other ! Surely we must argue that a mighty creation implies a mighty Creator. Without reverence there can be no real sonship. This mighty God is our Father ! We are His ' sons and heirs,' through faith in Jesus Christ. Let us reverence God. It will leave its repercussions in our own life and attitude and witness.

¶ Let nobody think that true reverence makes for gloom and insipidity, and that it robs life of its buoyancy and freshness. Henry Drummond once went out alone into the high Alps. He was there in the early morning. The stupendous heights encompassed him on every side. He was awed by their majesty. His soul was bowed in reverent worship. And then what happened ? He broke out into loud and exuberant laughter ! The succession was not accidental, it was the fruit of a hidden root. The man who begins with the reverent recognition of the holiness and majesty of God will rise into a buoyancy of spirit in which all the merrymaking powers will have free course to be glorified.[1]

(2) The second is *the necessity for intimate communion with God*. Without that, there can be no true sonship. That, too, is another characteristic mark of true family life. Among the privileges of children is that of ready, easy access to their parents. Once the disciples put a straight request to Jesus : ' Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us.' To which He returned a wonderful answer : ' He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' Such was the wonder of His intimate communion with God. We can share this experience. Christ meant us to share it.

' Mysticism ! ' you say ? There is an element of mysticism in every family relationship on earth. There is always ' the call of the blood.' We need not fear the mystic element in religion. Something in each one of us calls out for communion with God, and can be satisfied with nothing else. That divine spark reveals itself in different ways. It is seen when a young unmarried Salvation Army Officer slips out of a crowded boat in order that a young man might be united to his wife as they escape from a sinking ship. Men and women born with these potentialities in them were made—not to be children of the dust, but children of God, and for communion with Him. Man is not a ' toss-up,' as Dr C. Montefiore once said. He was made for great things. He is heir, if he will, to a great inheritance. Take the big reading of life, the Christian reading of it. You are meant to be the sons of God. Secure your sonship by

[1] J. H. Jowett.

keeping open, by way of prayer, praise, and service, the channels of communion with Him.

¶ You are doubtless familiar with the story of the toy-maker and his puppet, Pinocchio. The toy-maker regretted that he had never had a son, a human being like himself, on whom he could bestow his affection. He loved Pinocchio, but Pinocchio was only a puppet, which he had made with his own hands; he only looked human. But Pinocchio came alive, and became a real son to the toy-maker. God has a son: Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God, Divine like His father. But God has also a toyshop full of puppets, which are the work of His hands; and all the puppets are designed to come alive and to be adopted into His Divine family. Men and women are not the children of God; they are creatures that He has made; but He has made them in such a way that they may become His children.[1]

(3) And, in the third place, *the sons of God are free*; they are not servants or slaves. They are God's free-men, set free from the things that hold multitudes in thrall. They are free from bondage to sin. Christ has struck these shackles from their souls. They have been freed from dejection in a dejected age, for they know the love of God and they confide in it. They are free from bondage to soul-corroding egotism, for they have found a new centre of life in God. For them, 'to live, is Christ!' They are free from 'the fear of being alone,' for they know that One is 'with them alway, even unto the end of the age.' They are free to stand up for all that is good and true, 'for Christ hath conquered there.' They are free from the fear of death for 'Jesus Christ hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' 'I am come,' said Jesus, 'that ye might be free.' Accept your freedom, now, and possess your heritage in Christ.

'And if sons,' says Paul, 'then heirs, heirs of God through Christ.' Paul was not likely to miss the logical sequence and conclusion of his great argument. What a wonderful conception of life—heirs of God, here and now. Heirs, not to 'great expectations,' but to great possessions.

It is the sons of God who truly possess the earth. Wordsworth, the great poet of Nature, practically confesses that when he lost his early sense of God, he also lost his keener appreciation of Nature.

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
> To me did seem
> Apparelled in celestial light,
> The glory and the freshness of a dream.
> It is not now as it hath been of yore;
> Turn wheresoe'er I may,
> By night or day,
> The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

There is a way to recover the vision. Who is it that possesseth the earth but he who learns to trace everywhere 'the footprints of the Uncreated Wisdom.' 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.' It is the soul that is bounding and vital with a sense of God and God's handiwork, and that knows itself to be His son and heir. Who is it that learns to trace the Divine Hand in all circumstances? It is the man and the woman who have put their trust in the Divine Providence and who have committed themselves to God.

¶ Dr Jowett writes that the lovely county of Devonshire overflows into Somerset, and the traveller passing through the latter on his way to the former foretastes the glory yet to come. So it is with the sons and heirs of God! The openings of the streets of Heaven are on earth.

A Lesson in Christian Grammar

Gal. iv. 9.—'But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage.'

'Ye have known God, or rather are known of God.' Here we have St Paul suddenly correcting himself and turning the thought round in the other direction. It is not so much a question of you Galatians knowing God, he says, as of God knowing you. There is an enormous difference between these two attitudes, or two relations, and it is a difference that is vital to the New Testament gospel. 'Ye have not chosen me,' said Jesus to the disciples, 'but I have chosen you.' And so St John says, 'It is not that we loved Him but that He loved us.' We get the same doubleness of thought again in St Paul where, for example, he says that he is pressing forward in order to apprehend that

[1] G. B. Caird, *The Truth of the Gospel*, 96.

for which he has been apprehended by God. It is not so much a case of knowing God as of being known by God.

What is at the bottom of all this? What is the meaning of this basic reverse in the Christian faith?

1. St Paul tells us there are two different attitudes that one can adopt towards God—a heathen attitude and a Christian attitude. The difficulty with the Galatians was that they were backsliding into the old heathen attitude to God and although they were professing Christians they were walking about in the cast-off clothes that Christianity had left behind. In fact, he says, they had turned their backs upon Jesus Christ and had gone back to the weak and beggarly elements of heathenism.

In Christianity knowledge of God consists in being known by God. Paul was afraid that the Galatians should imagine that they had discovered God. What actually happened was that God had discovered them, had broken into the midst of their life by revelation. It was literally an invasion. With the coming of the Apostles and the word of the gospel the truth of God had broken into the midst of their minds, into the midst of their religion and set everything in uproar. Everything was altered and turned upside down. The Word of God had pounced upon them. God had apprehended them. That was the one colossal fact in Galatia. The living God, God in Jesus Christ, absolutely sovereign in their midst. And now, what happened? These Galatians had tamed the word of God, they had domesticated God and so they settled down to a tame religion. They were respectable people for they no longer worshipped idols and they had a respectable God—a nice bourgeois God, and a respectable church with a nice middle-class religion and its tame respectable theology. Instead of the Word of God being the master, these Galatians thought they had mastered God's Word.

That is why St Paul corrected himself in this sentence. You have indeed come to know God, he said, then suddenly stopped. That is just what is wrong, that is your great mistake. No! God has come to know you. God has given Himself to be known. God has discovered Himself to you.

2. Here is a lesson in simple grammar. Analyse the sentence, 'Man knows God' into its subject, predicate, and object. Yes!—man is the subject. He is the important thing. He is the No. 1. And God? Why, He is the object. What! said St Paul, God the object? You foolish Galatians, your spiritual grammar is all wrong! It is God who is the subject. God cannot be an object. An object-God is an idol. God is always subject. He is the Lord God Almighty. Fancy domesticating God as though He were a mere object of your knowing! Why! You have returned to your childhood, St Paul says. Religion is not a question of grammar and rudiments, certainly not the grammar and rudiments of this world. Christianity is a living faith and God is alive in it. He is the Master. He is the creative centre of all our knowing and believing and loving. This is the Christian religion, the invasion of the living God into a man's soul. It is a heathen impulse indeed that tries to tame this living God and make Him a prisoner of human grammar.

There was another occasion when St Paul played Christian tricks with human grammar. It was in the Epistle to the Romans where he says, 'God be thanked that though you Romans were once the servants of sin you have now obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered to you.' But Paul said that in such a way that the real meaning is gained by putting it the other way round and so the Revised Version translates it differently. 'Ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered.' It is not so much a case of the Word of God being delivered to you Romans as of you being delivered into the hands of the Word of God. Once more it is God who is the subject, the Lord and Master of all.

That is the Christianity of the Bible. Faith is never a matter of your pronouncing an opinion on the Bible, but of the opinion of the Bible about you. You thought perhaps the Bible could be handled by men, but in fact men are handled by the Bible. Perhaps when you come to church you think you are called upon as respectable churchmen to pronounce an opinion on the Word of God, but the truth is exactly the other way round. The Word of God intends to pass an opinion upon you, and you come to let the Word of the living God speak to you and to master you. That is the heart of the

obedience of faith. Anything else is paganism: to slide back into the old heathen attitude in which man is subject and God only an object.

3. How do you worship God?

Have you ever stood still somewhere in the wilds: perhaps in the secluded silence of a mountain corrie? You thought you were alone in pensive contemplation, mastering with your eyes all you surveyed, then suddenly with a start you realized you were not alone. Another presence than yours was there. Some one had invaded your sanctuary. You did not know from where, but from behind some tree or rock there were eyes fastened upon you, watching your every movement. Your startled emotions became turgid with excitement and they tingled with apprehension. You were being observed and it disturbed you. You were not alone. There was another near you, within the orbit of whose gaze every step was taken.

It was something like that that the Psalmist felt when he said, 'O Lord, thou hast watched me and known me.' That is the beginning of real faith. It is the overpowering sense that we are known through and through by God. It begins when God breaks into the circle of our own inner thoughts and suddenly we are aware of His eyes scanning every inmost corner of our being. It is only as we know ourselves to be known by God like that that we really come to a knowledge of Him. We do not know God until—sometimes it is like a flash of lightning in the dark—we see ourselves as we really are. Then we know we stand in the light and presence of God, that His eyes have turned aside all the shame and hypocrisy behind which we have tried to hide ourselves. It is in that moment when the nakedness of the human soul is laid bare before heaven that we know God and we know that we know Him because He knows us.

The important factor in this relation is not you, but God. There is a stupendous difference there, the difference between paganism and Christianity; the difference between a man who only 'knows' and the man who knows that he is known by God. No doubt in ordinary experience and everyday language the important factor is you—you know, you look, you observe, you examine, you feel sure. But here in Christianity that relation is completely reversed in importance. It is God alone who is the subject. It is His eyes which search and scan the souls of men. When you know yourself to be discovered by God to yourself, then you know indeed. So long as the 'I' occupies the central place in your thought you are lapsing back into the grammar of the heathen, the weak and beggarly elements of this world. You do not have a living faith until you learn to put all the emphasis upon God. 'Thou knowest me.' 'Thou, God, seest me.' When the living God has invaded your life and turned the tables upon your soul like that you have an experience which cannot be construed in human grammar, but which is the bedrock of reality. Before that vivid and steadfast knowledge all other knowledge appears fleeting and vain. Until the tables of your soul have been turned like that, until you have allowed the living God and His Word to be the absolute master of your fate you cannot approach Him in humble worship or find the comfort and peace of faith that you desire.

T. F. Torrance.

Back to the Reformation?

Gal. iv. 9.—'But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage.'

1. A church's approach to new problems in a changing world may sometimes be by way of regress—not to retreat nor to escape, but to observe the past and learn. This may account for the growing interest in the Reformation, its leaders, and its thought, which ministers and laity of the churches, which stem from it, show in that event. Paradoxically enough the very existence of the Oecumenical Movement, the Armed Forces' simplification of denominations, the situation in the Mission Field, better publicized and more widely known at first-hand by many, may have contributed to such interest. It is significant that the Reformed emphasis on the Bible as the Word of God has been re-asserted as it has not been since the chill winds of criticism began to blow, and almost as significant that Calvin is being read, studied, and quoted as a vital authority for to-day. All this seems to be tending towards the belief that the past has much, if not everything, to teach the

present, and that the Reformed Churches will best meet to-day's challenge in all the panoply of their first beginnings.

There can be no denying that there is value in such research and rediscovery. Most of us do not know too accurately what were the reasons why the Church should have become divided, and the origin and standards even of our own communion can remain wrapped in mystery. Our heritage in public worship, whether what we do now was done in the beginning; the characteristic notes of our theology, whether what we believe now comes from the Reformers; these problems are a closed book to us. This, of course, is no reason why they should remain so, and a church can always learn about and from its own past. The glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of the martyrs, have some word for their comrades-in-arms of to-day, whose warfare and whose Captain are still the same. But is this backward look always good or has it about it an element of danger?

2. St Paul is referring to a situation which, if not exactly similar, is analogous, in this Galatian Epistle. His Galatian converts were being urged by Christian Jews that belief in Jesus was not sufficient religion. It needed to be supplemented by an observance of the Jewish Law, the religion whence Jesus Himself had come. So the Galatians were being told that to increase and perfect their faith, circumcision and the keeping of the whole Law were required. Now Paul in his heart of hearts knew that the Law had been a blessing to his people, though it could not be compared with the blessing of salvation in Jesus, so he declares to these converts that what they possessed—faith in God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit who comes by faith—could never either be supplemented or supplanted by the Law. This was to give up freedom for the bondage of 'the weak and beggarly elements,' after God had known them and they had known God. Here is the timeless element in Paul's teaching, where he is declaring that more important than anything else is the standing of the individual with God. It was his understanding of this that helped Martin Luther to stand and oppose the Church of his day which, however great and far-flung it was, was yet a weak and beggarly element compared with the majesty and love of God as he knew them in the Temple of his own soul, where he himself was his own priest. Indeed Luther drew much of his strength and confidence from this very Epistle. 'The Epistle to the Galatians,' he said, 'is my epistle: I have betrothed myself to it; it is my wife.'

It is right for us to remember what Paul says and how Paul helped Luther to make the Reformation. For even the glories of our past can become a substitute for belief, mere elements, weak because they cannot deliver us, beggarly because they have no riches in themselves apart from the faith in God through Jesus, which in the beginning made them and made them live. We must not let it be so. To go back to the worship or the theology or the discipline without the immediate experience is to relive the fate of the foolish virgins, by trying to light in a new era in our church life with lamps having no oil in them. The past can be a bountiful heritage, and it can be a new bondage into which we force ourselves, believing that the result must be grace for us because it seemed grace for them who lived in it. But we are not they. Neither do we live in their times. The system of worship, work, and creed, which we need, may be like theirs, and yet again it may be different. After all these are but the framework of faith. Faith is the first thing and the clothing of it only secondary, and as their ordinary garments would not seem suitable for our life, no more may the forms of thought or organization in which they clothed the life they possessed in the Spirit. We wish to preserve what was their glory, but did not Burke say that 'a state without the means of change is without the means of conservation.' What made the Reformation and what made the Reformers was the realization that not preserving the old forms, but changing them, may be the only way to safeguard their intention and to preserve their truth. The Church is never infallible, neither the Pope's church nor the Reformer's church, and rebuilding their system without reference to our own experience is to deny the latter's greatest principle, the right always to reform and renew according as the Holy Spirit shall illumine our minds from God's word, revealing His will for the Church, the world, and ourselves.

It is very well then to show an antiquarian spirit in our ecclesiastical past, and to be proud of it, but not in this way will revival come and our churches again be the powers in the land

which Calvin and Knox made them. This would be like foolishly venerating some great cathedral and being blind to the fact that it is little use for preaching and inadequate in the nature of its accommodation for the teeming life of organizations which may have grown up around it. Not all that happened at the Reformation was good. Nor was all before it or after it of necessity bad. We must be reformers always if the mind of Christ is in any sense in us; for God has always some new truth to reveal out of His Word for our help and guidance. The essential thing is our individual belief in God, with the collective benefits which this can bestow. Paul says that it 'pleased God to form his Son in me.' All the human means which helped to this are blotted out, and Paul and God stand in a face to face relation in Christ Jesus. There, too, we must begin, with our personal response to what God has done, and take that to the principles of the Reformers and the problems of the world for our touchstone and our standard. Nothing else will avail. The Spirit illumines the Word and the Word illumines life itself, and the true reformer is he who

Corrects the portrait by the living face,
Man's God by God's God in the mind of man.

For us, then, it can never be merely back to Luther or Calvin or Knox, but only back to the God whom they worshipped, and for whom their systems were built through Jesus Christ our Lord.

JOHN GRAY.

Truth no Enemy

Gal. iv. 16.—'Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?'

THESE words must refer to something that took place on Paul's second visit. On the first visit the Galatians were full of enthusiastic devotion to him. But it would appear from the present verse that information had reached him which showed that their feelings towards him had changed, and they complained that he was not so friendly towards them as formerly. If this change arose from his telling them the truth, his frank speech must have been on occasion of the second visit. Whether he then found an inclination to Judaism or other evils which called for his reproof we are not told; but whatever may have been the occasion, the Judaizers seem to have taken advantage of it to persuade the vain and fickle Galatians that a man who spoke so freely to them could not be their friend. Paul's reply is that he only spoke the truth, and to speak the truth is no evidence of hostility. He had not become their enemy because he spoke to them the unpalatable truth concerning themselves.

1. The Apostle here lays down the principle that truth is not to be regarded as an enemy by any honest or God-fearing man. The principle has its application in all controversies between science or philosophy and religion. God is true, and whatsoever is of truth cannot be hostile to the cause of true religion. The efforts which the Church formerly put forth to stifle thought and slay the spirit of enquiry were essentially mistaken and mischievous. The more recent denunciation of scientific research and of the Higher Criticism of the Bible was no less out of place. One can understand the hostility of those who stood in the old ways, themselves untroubled. The new thoughts, the new ideas, seemed to throw doubt upon what they regarded as the very truth of God. When scientists developed theories regarding the creation of the earth and the antiquity of man, which seemed to contradict the statements of the Book of Genesis, or when scholars brought forward theories regarding the composition of Scripture which seemed to destroy the doctrine of inspiration, many pious men trembled for the ark of God, and denounced the scientist and the scholar as the enemies of religion and of the Church. But neither the scientist, nor the scholar, nor the philosopher is an enemy of true religion, if he tells the truth.

The truth of God endures, the same from generation to generation, but men's understanding of it changes and develops. Human understanding itself is a developing and increasing thing, and therefore God's revelation of Himself to men must be progressive and gradual. Jesus Christ is the way, and the truth, and the life: there will come no other, greater than He, to reveal to us God and the things of God; but what wise man will say to-day, even

after so many Christian centuries, that he perfectly understands the revelation of Jesus Christ, or has searched out all the depths of its hidden wisdom? Human ideas change. Human theories change. The endeavour of believing men and women must be to keep in touch with facts, to keep their minds humble, and teachable, and open to whatsoever of new light may shine upon them.

This point cannot be better illustrated than by the familiar story or legend of Galileo, whose astronomical teachings were regarded by the Church of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as subversive of Christian faith and doctrine: he upheld the Copernican system of astronomy, declaring that the sun is the central body of the heavens, and that the earth moves round the sun. Twice over he consented to the condemnation of his teaching, and once at least recanted his scientific creed. But as he concluded his recantation, so the story ran, he murmured, 'Nevertheless it does move.' Nevertheless the earth does move. There was the fact, despite his own weakness and the ecclesiastical bigotry of the time, and if churchmen's theories conflicted with the fact, so much the worse for their theories.

Similarly, when scientists had demonstrated that the narrative of Genesis could not be regarded as a literal and scientifically exact account of the creation of the world, it was futile to ignore the fact, or to denounce the scientist as an enemy of God. It became necessary to readjust theories concerning the composition and the interpretation of Scripture. Nature, no less than Scripture, is God's book, and neither, rightly interpreted, will contradict the other. We believe that religion rests upon the truth of God, and our fundamental position must be that the publication of truth cannot be hostile to true religion. We do not indeed accept as necessarily true everything which science or philosophy asserts to be true. Many claims made by philosophers and scientists, and many theories put forward by them with great assurance, are now entirely discredited. The unbeliever may be as dogmatic as the believer. When the scientist leaves his own sphere, as he is fond of doing, and makes pronouncements concerning religion, we may remind ourselves that, as a scientist, he has no authority outside his own sphere.

¶ Many people believed that Sir Oliver Lodge was as great an authority on Spiritualism and life after death as on Physics. They transferred his authority from the realm in which he had won it to a realm in which he was a beginner. Religion suffers particularly in this way. I remember a well-known newspaper running a series of articles on the theme, 'Where are the dead?' The readers were entertained, if not instructed, by articles from film-stars, jockeys, journalists, and others whose reputations had been fairly won in their own fields, but none of whom apparently had read any metaphysics.[1]

Again, if we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Light of the world, we can hardly accept any teaching which contradicts His in the essential matters of religion, and when we encounter plausible arguments which run counter to His teaching, we may well suspend judgment, recognizing our own limitations and remembering His pre-eminence. But we may not decline the challenge. It is always possible that our understanding of His meaning is at fault, or that we have mistaken the nature of the authority which we should claim for Him in certain departments of knowledge. If scientists or philosophers can convince us of error, we should be grateful to them. The fundamental contention is that no man—be he scientist or philosopher, or be he atheist—can, *by manifestation of the truth*, injure the cause of God. Therefore we should welcome enquiry and research.

2. Truth has also its personal aspect and application, and we are not to count him an enemy who tells us the truth concerning ourselves. He who reproves our faults may be an enemy, and may speak in malice; but he is not an enemy because he tells us the truth.

International criticism is generally resented and returned in kind. The Cretans would not appreciate the native prophet whose finger fastened on their national failing, nor would the apostle have been popular who gave his testimony to the verdict. And this is the usual consequence of international candour.

¶ In a speech at Calcutta University Lord Curzon treated the native students to some plain speaking about the besetting Oriental tendency to take liberties with the truth. This

[1] Leslie D. Weatherhead.

was more than the self-love of the Bengali could bear, and forthwith the native newspapers teemed with invective.

The man who is called upon to reprove or to rebuke has an ungracious task. This duty was laid upon the Old Testament prophets, God's spokesmen to Israel, and upon the apostles of New Testament times, who were set to shepherd and to rule the flock of Christ. The same duty rests still, in measure, upon the Christian minister. Moreover, especially in times like the present, this duty is laid also upon men of public affairs and upon all who aspire to guide and influence their fellows. It is no time for speaking smooth things of false import, for crying Peace, peace, when there is no peace. It is true that little profit can be derived from mutual recrimination and fault-finding as between individuals or parties or classes within the community; but the voice of truth should be heard, even though it speak unflattering things. Unfortunately, now, as always, men are ready to count any one an enemy who finds fault with them, or with their class, or with their profession. No doubt an enemy may speak truth malignantly, exulting in the faults or failings which he exposes, desiring only to wound. But when we are reproved, or when an accusation is brought against us, there is but one question of commanding importance: Is the reproof deserved? Is the accusation true? The man who tells us the truth, even the unpalatable truth concerning ourselves, is not necessarily an enemy. If it is spoken in malice, we may resent the malice, but should endeavour to profit by the truth. If it is spoken in love we should welcome it.

¶ Emerson says: 'The wise man throws himself on the side of his assailants. It is more his interest than it is theirs to find his weak point.'

¶ No one in public work can escape criticism. I have had my share. It used to cut me to the quick. But now when criticism comes I find myself asking, Is it true? If so, I will take it, will profit by it. My critics thus become 'the unpaid watchmen of my soul.'[1]

Dear is my friend, but my foe too
  Is friendly to my good;
My friend the thing shows I *can* do,
  My foe the thing I should.

[1] E. Stanley Jones.

The Mother City

Gal. iv. 26.—'But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.'

1. The reverence of an Englishman for London or a Frenchman for Paris or even an Italian for Rome is hardly to be compared with the passion of an old-time Jew for Jerusalem. For him it was the Holy City, the centre and symbol of a living unity and a divine destiny; and in exile his heart turned to it as the heart of the saint turns to God.[1]

Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain
  are flying,
Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,
Where about the graves of the martyrs the
  whaups are crying,
My heart remembers how!

That is Robert Louis Stevenson, dreaming of the home of his fathers and the land of his birth. But it was a Jew to whom it was given to express once for all time, and for every exiled soul, the passion of home and all the plaintiveness of parting, the intolerable yearning of the heart, saddened by an irrevocable farewell—'By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song: and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning'—and then the pent-up emotion of the man breaks through restraint at last and surges out vehemently, almost violently, in words of unbearable pathos—'If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.' That is not rhetoric, or fine writing, or poetry with an eye to effect: it is a sob wrung from the heart by life's immemorial pain.

Jerusalem, my happy home,
  Would God I were in thee!
Would God my woes were at an end,
  Thy joys that I might see!

[1] G. O. Griffith.

History, religion, home—all these, for the Hebrew mind, were gathered up into the name Jerusalem. Nor did it mean less for Christ Himself. There are just two places in the Gospels where the evangelists tell us that Jesus wept. Once it was at the grave of His friend Lazarus; and once when, coming round the shoulder of the Mount of Olives, He saw the city of David spread out before Him in the sunshine, and stood gazing at it with eyes dimmed with a sudden mist of tears. 'He beheld the city,' says the evangelist, 'and wept over it'—tears of infinite tenderness and compassion, and of bitterest regret for what might have been. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not!' Dear as the spring-time to the earth, dear as remembered love in lonely days—so dear was Jerusalem to the heart of the Redeemer.

2. But what of ourselves? Has all this any relevance for us to-day? Surely the significant fact is this, that everything that Jerusalem meant for the Jew has now passed into the very blood of the race. The actual city which Jesus saw from Olivet we may never have set eyes upon: yet the world's heart turns thither as the needle to the pole. We too have walked those streets where in ancient time the feet of Jesus went; we have dreamt those dreams and sung those songs of Zion, and inscribed our names on the burgess roll of her free citizens; we too have seen the sun flaming down behind the battlements and ramparts of the city of God. People who scarce ever moved from the village where they were born have died with this dear name upon their lips; and St Paul was speaking for us no less than for his own contemporaries when he flung out the magnificent sentence—'Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all!'

In particular this name gathers up into itself three of the deepest constituent elements of our nature.

(1) The first is *the hunger for God*. The cares and problems which infest our human life, the incessant pressure of its difficult demands, would soon end in suffocating and stifling the soul within us—were it not for this, that daily we can open our windows towards Jerusalem. That instinct for God burns within us, and will not be denied. And even if sometimes it may seem dead and buried, even if in some lives the winds of doubt and denial may appear to have blown out the light for ever, even if there is nothing left but the cold grey ashes of an unbelieving materialism, a heart invulnerable to all spiritual influences and immune from the invasions of divine grace, even then (this is the marvel of it, and the boundless hope) there is no saying when that dead thing within may resurrect itself, and go crying for the God who is its home! For as Jerusalem haunted the dreams of the Jew, so we are all God-haunted spirits.

¶ As Browning's Bishop Blougram puts it, a man may declare himself a convinced unbeliever, but just when he is feeling safest in his unbelief,

> there's a sunset-touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
> A chorus-ending from Euripides,—
> And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
> As old and new at once as nature's self,
> To rap and knock and enter in our soul.

The blessed thing is this, that there are none of our human defences—not self-sufficiency, not deliberate prayerlessness, not iron walls of depression and despair, not even downright flagrant sin—none of them which can guarantee infallibly to keep God out. For the crucial fact about our nature is not the desperate limitations that vex and thwart and shackle us, it is not the awful solitude in which we sometimes seem to stand, it is not the tyranny of moods or the obsession of inferiority or the burden of defeat: the crucial fact is the capacity for God with which we have been born, which not 'tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword' or shame or sin can ever finally eradicate. 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem.' But we can't! For God will not be suppressed. God haunts, disturbs, tracks down at last, confronts us with a cross. And there, there only, can our restless, hungry hearts find peace.

(2) Beyond this hunger for God, there is a second deep constituent element of our nature connoted by the word Jerusalem, namely, *the craving for the fellowship of a beloved community*. Man was never made to stand alone. He was made for fellowship. He knows that without fellowship he is a poor creature, only half alive. He needs the society of his brethren. Even

in his religion, yes, in his religion more than anywhere else, he feels the necessity of breaking down his isolation, of standing with others, as he turns his face towards the challenge of the ultimate mysteries of life and death and eternity. He wants a satisfying community of kindred minds. He wants the city of God. He wants—for this is what it comes to, however derisively he may deny it—he wants the Church.

¶ In Nature the normal way in which trees flourish is by their association in a forest. A single tree standing by itself is exposed to many adverse circumstances. The wind stunts it; the rains denude its soil, its leaves are blown away and lost for the purpose of fertilization. But growing together the trees mutually assist each other in supplying the conditions for survival.

This is capable of good application. The Christian who 'neglects the assembling' of himself with brother Christians is putting his soul in peril. Nothing is plainer in the teaching of our Lord than this—that His people need each other. He was not content to save the individual. He built a Church, and gave precious promises to it, that it might be to each of His people what the forest is to the trees.[1]

So it was when William Blake dreamt his dream of 'building Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land.' So it was when John of the Revelation brought his book to a close with a vision that has moved and warmed and thrilled the hearts of men and women ever since: 'I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.' And so it is to-day wherever—over against the world, challenging the world, refusing to identify itself with the prevailing voices of the world—stands the Christian community, the nucleus and earnest of the new world-order that is to be. It matters not how plain the buildings where the little company gathers for its worship, it matters not how many flaws and imperfections a sneering critic may detect: wherever two or three are met in Christian fellowship, there is the city of God. There is the kingdom of heaven already in action.

(3) Finally, there is *the instinct of immortality*. That is the last deep element of our nature symbolized by the name Jerusalem. We have an intuition that death, when it comes to us one day, will not destroy or render void one atom of our essential being. We have a strange impregnable conviction that death cannot stop us, that we shall go right through it and out at the other side, and that beyond the dark valley there will be the sunshine of an eternal morning. Long before Shakespeare had ever penned a line or put his famous soliloquy on death and the beyond into Hamlet's mouth, there was a Christian monk in a French monastery, Bernard of Cluny, who with far deeper insight saw behind the darkness of the grave, and spoke not of an 'undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns,' but taught the Church to sing—

O sweet and blessèd country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessèd country,
That eager hearts expect!

Mere sentiment? When Bernard wrote 'Jerusalem the golden' eight hundred years ago, the world he saw around him was rotten to the core, and ripe for doom, and plunging back to chaos and primeval darkness: and the hearts of the faithful remnant, Christ's pitiful minority, looked wistfully beyond earth's miseries and sorrows, and grew homesick for heaven. Is the instinct of immortality, then, mere sentimental otherworldliness? The nostalgia of the weak and cowardly? On the contrary! It is the virile faith of the heroic and the strong. It is the true essential realism. Let your blind worldling say what he likes: we *are* strangers here, and exiles, and pilgrims of eternity. This is not our rest! The earth is too narrow to hold us. Our citizenship is in the heavenly Jerusalem; and in our Father's house are many mansions.[1]

My Father's house on high,
Home of my soul, how near
At times to faith's foreseeing eye
Thy golden gates appear!
Ah! then my spirit faints
To reach the land I love,
The bright inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above.

[1] *The British Weekly*, February 9, 1933.

[1] J. S. Stewart, *The Strong Name*, 181.

The Law of Liberty

Gal. iv. 31.—'We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.'

HERE we are concerned with the thought of two things—liberty and captivity. On the one hand we are required to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. When He gives us His command, Go and prepare My way before Me, if we are true disciples we must obey. When He lays down the law of the spiritual life that none can reach His right hand and His left except through suffering and crucifixion, it is a law which must be obeyed. But on the other hand we read such words as those of the text: 'We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free'; or 'the glorious freedom of the children of God'; or 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom'; or 'stand therefore in the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.' How can we speak of captivity and obedience in the same breath with freedom or liberty? St James twice over is bold enough to speak of 'the law of freedom'; and St Peter says that Christians are to be 'as free,' and yet 'as slaves of God.' The words seem, at first sight, to present to us a contradiction in terms. When a man is freed from chains, or locked doors, or slavery, or restrictions, he can do as he likes and go where he pleases. And the word 'law' might seem to give us yet another restriction. Thou shalt do this, and thou shalt not do that, hardly appear to leave a man free. If he is obliged to obey, that is, if he is punished when he disobeys, where is his freedom? But does a parent enslave his children when he teaches them to obey him? Does he give them freedom when he spoils them, and allows them to disobey him? St James quite clearly says No. His expression, 'the law of freedom,' gives us a new and higher idea of what freedom means.

1. It has this meaning in the natural as well as in the spiritual world. There are what we call the laws of health; and, if our body is to be free from illness, we must obey them. The laws are absolute, for they are laws of God's own making. Which, then, is best—to be free to do as we like with our bodies, or to be free from illness? The one is the wrong, and the other the right meaning of freedom.

Not very many years ago the aeroplane, the submarine, the telegraph, and a host of other inventions, were undreamt of. All these involve certain natural laws—the law of gravitation, the laws which 'govern,' as we say, the strength of metals, electricity, chemistry, and a hundred other things. And these laws were all existent in the world then as now; and then as now they were absolute, inexorable. But men had not learnt to understand them, and therefore could not obey them. And because they could not obey them, they were not free. They were unable to send a message to the other side of the planet in less than the twinkling of an eye; they were unable to travel and take photographs at the bottom of the sea; they were unable to fly through the air at hundreds of miles an hour. They were unable to do countless things that they can do now, and therefore they were not as free as they are now.

If a man goes up in an aeroplane and disobeys some law involved in flying, would he be prepared to justify himself by saying that he is a free man and can do what he likes? We know that the result of his disobedience will be catastrophe, immediate and very likely fatal.

2. We cannot turn to a single department of thought or life without finding the same principle unalterably at work. And we need not expect to find any difference when we think about the spiritual life of our souls. Some of us may have had moments when we were swept with a longing desire to grow in holiness. We have read of some of the great saints, modern as well as ancient; and we feel that we are not in the least like them. We are so ordinary, so weak, so easily tired of goodness and of God. And all because we have not learnt to *obey*. The man who knows and obeys the relevant laws can mount his aeroplane and fly freely. We know the laws of the spiritual life, and we don't obey them, and therefore we remain earthbound and helpless.

(1) We know the law, for instance, that he that loseth his life—his Self—shall find it. Obedience to that law means a steady, continuous, consistent sacrifice of Self. But if, instead of that, we live our life on the do-as-I-like method, the result is not freedom but catastrophe; 'he that saveth his life shall lose it.'

¶ The man who pursues a life of unrestricted freedom is following a will-o'-the-wisp, whose

destiny is some treacherous morass. There is deep significance in the history of King Saul, the chosen of Jehovah, who afterwards became so sad a spectacle. He also determined to be free, and rose in pride against the restraints of the Divine will. Led by turbulent passions, forsaking altar and prophet, he followed the dictates of his own unhallowed ambitions, until at last we find the anointed of Jehovah—the tool of witchcraft! It is a chapter in history which has been frequently repeated. The man who rises up in revolt against the higher law finds himself in bondage to one that is lower.[1]

(2) We know the law that spiritual progress is impossible without prayer, as the progress of a steam engine is impossible without steam. But instead of storing our life with a full, driving, irresistible supply of this source of energy, some of us try to get along with a minimum of it. Let us remind ourselves again that God is one in whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning. He has given our spiritual life a law which shall not be broken, the law of the absolute necessity of real prayer. And nothing in heaven or earth will induce Him to alter it. If we obeyed it our progress would be free.

¶ 'Twelve years ago,' writes Winifred Kirkland in *As Far as I Can See*, 'I undertook to practise prayer in earnest. . . . Twelve years ago I found it hard enough to hold my attention on my praying for ten minutes a day, now an hour is not enough for the direction and the communion that have become as indispensable as my food and drink.'

(3) Once more. We know the law—or the truism, of the self-evident proposition—that if a Divine gift is to be of use to us we must use it. The greatest of Christ's 'gifts unto men' is His gift of Himself by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We possess the possibility of the whole, full, boundless energy of God. And we don't use it. We *can* use it; it can be as a burning, blazing furnace within us, producing the steam power which can drive us forward. And we *can* change the hearts, and comfort the sorrows, and strengthen the wills, and lighten the darkness of the men and women round us; we can draw them with the cords of a man, the cords of love, to yield themselves to Christ's captivity and follow in His train; or we could, if we obeyed the Divine law. Our love would be free, and therefore our spiritual work and progress would be free if we obeyed the perfect law, the law of freedom.

[1] Trevor H. Davies, *Spiritual Voices in Modern Literature*, 170.

The Moral Freedom of a Christian

Gal. v. 1.—'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.'

It was Thomas Hardy who once wrote, 'It is the ongoing of the world that produces its sadness. If the world stood still at a felicitous moment there would be no sadness in it.' Apart from the fact that there can never be any moment of time that is felicitous for everybody there is a host of other reasons why God, in His wisdom, sees to it that this world does not stand still, but goes on in a constant process of change. With every change that occurs in the world, be it a new scientific discovery, a new social service, a new political theory, an alteration in our circumstances or something catastrophic befalling us, we are immediately confronted with a moral question, namely, what is the Christian attitude to this new situation which has arisen? In his gripping story *Escape*, John Galsworthy tells of a convict who has made a bolt from Dartmoor. When his pursuers are right on his heels the criminal slips into a church, where a service is just concluding, and hides in the vestry. The worship over, the vicar enters his vestry to disrobe only to discover the fugitive. Feverishly the convict protests his innocence and asks the priest to help him elude his pursuers. When he notices that his working on the clergyman's pity has brought his sympathy and sense of duty into conflict, the hunted man launches his last appeal, saying, 'Look here, padre, what would Jesus Christ do?' This is precisely the predicament we are in with every change that occurs in this world, or in our own circumstances. We are forced to ask the question, 'What would Christ do in face of this new development which has arisen?' And how are we to find the answer?

Paul spills the secret in this letter to the Galatians, particularly in this verse. He had

been on his missionary travels in Asia Minor, and when passing through Galatia an old physical complaint, he termed the thorn in the flesh, laid him low. Unable to be idle, this restless apostle began to preach in Galatia where he was detained. One of the cardinal things he taught all his converts was that they should be filled with the Holy Spirit which God gives to any who ask Him, and take it as their guide in life. Once that new Galatian church was established and his health had been restored Paul went on his way. It was not long until news reached him that Jewish Christians from Jerusalem had gone to Galatia in his absence and told the young converts that if they were to know how to act in the Christian way in all new situations they must observe the Jewish law and take it as guide. Infuriated at this turn of events Paul wrote this letter to the Galatian church in which he points out that the Jewish law, or any system of laws, is futile as a guide to Christian conduct in a changing world. There is one guide, and one guide only, if a Christian man would know what the mind of Christ is on every new situation or problem that arises, and that is the Holy Spirit. Before he set off with Scott on that ill-fated expedition to the South Pole, Dr Wilson went for a holiday on a Norwegian whaler. Once the party arrived in the cold whaling waters of the North they sighted one of the monsters, but before they could get within firing range the whale disappeared beneath the surface. For two hours the skipper cruised in a certain direction and at the end of that period the mammal rose close to the ship and was captured. Dr Wilson was impressed, and enquired of the skipper how he guessed that the creature would rise in that particular spot in such an expanse of ocean and received the reply, 'I tink I know vhat dat vhal will tink—dat chap—he tink, ven I go down, I go dis way—ja—den I tink, ja, dis way : so I go not dis way, but dat way. Often I tink I know vhat dat vhal tink, in my het.' There is, avers Paul, a parallel kind of instinct which the Holy Spirit creates in a Christian man. It guides him with uncanny accuracy as to what is the Christian thing to do in any new perplexing situation in which he finds himself. As Dean Inge puts it in his volume on Mysticism, 'Paul exalts the inner light into an absolute criterion of right and wrong that no corner of the moral life may remain in bondage to Pharisaism.' This was the way to know the mind of Christ in an ever-changing world that Paul had taught the Galatians and was pleading with them not to depart from when he says here, 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.'

This, of course, might be justly claimed as most dangerous teaching. When men depend upon the Holy Spirit to be their guide in Christian conduct in an ever-changing world then all sorts of errors and abuses are liable to arise. If Madame Roland, who fought for the liberation of the French peasants at the Revolution and was guillotined for her pains, discovered that crimes are committed in the name of liberty, how much trouble must be expected when men are encouraged to be free from external laws, and undertake the liberty of employing the Holy Spirit as their supreme guide in Christian conduct. Men can never wholly free their judgments from self interest and are bound at times to mistake the impulses of their own desires for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as many naïve members of the Oxford Group, whatever our attitude to this Movement be, amply demonstrate. Yet, Paul was no simpleton. His letters reveal a Christian wiliness allied to his profound insight, and full well he knew from his own experience that if his simple converts rejected the Jewish law and took the Holy Spirit as their sole guide in Christian conduct, they would run the risk of making mistakes. But he realized that such was no reason for withholding this teaching from men if it were true. Risks are attached to all truth. Every truth is perverted by selfish men, as each new discovery of science reveals. Yet truth is not withheld from men on that account, and rightly so. Despite the risks involved, Paul therefore did not hesitate to give this teaching to his converts, for it was true. But what made the Apostle so certain that this was the real way for the Galatians and for all Christians to know what Christ would do in all situations in a world where the sun does not stand still, and to insist that this is the way we should take whatever the dangers ? This was a theme Paul touched on in other letters, beside the Galatians, and when the Epistles as a whole are examined, many pertinent reasons are given as to why the Spirit is to be taken by Christians as guide in all moral questions ; but in this Epistle only two are hinted at.

1. The one is that this was the way of Christ. It was said of a noted theologian that whenever he spoke he gave the impression that a greater than Christ was here. While that may be a gross libel on this particular individual, there is no limit to the heights of men's arrogance, and there do appear in every age men who believe and give the impression to the world that they are far wiser than Jesus, the simple Galilean. His teaching they could and would dare to improve upon. Paul's debt to Christ, and his piercing insight into His unique greatness, and into his own nature, could never allow him to fall into such an error. He realized that the servant is truly not above his Lord. To him, Christ stood apart, as God Himself incarnate; and when He spoke, God spoke. Thus, what Christ did, was for Paul, authoritative. As he examined the ways and teaching of his Lord, Paul saw that He had set men free from the Jewish law as their guide in morals, and, resolutely refusing to impose upon men a new set of rules, had told them that the Holy Spirit was their one true guide in this matter. Had not the complaint of Jesus against the Pharisees been that not only had they devoured widows' houses but that they had imposed laws upon men grievous to be borne? Was not Peter told at Cæsarea Philippi that whatever he bound on earth would be bound in heaven, and what he loosed on earth would be ratified in heaven, which meant that with the Spirit alone as his guide Simon would be able to judge rightly on moral questions? Before taking leave of the Twelve, did Jesus not promise that the Holy Spirit would descend upon them and it would lead them into all truth? Had He Himself not driven a carriage and pair through the sterile laws for the observance of the Sabbath day and revealed that He had taken some other guide than the law for His rule of conduct? Paul saw, as evidently the other apostles did not see so readily, that Christ had set men free from the Jewish law as the guide in morals and had given them the Holy Spirit in its stead. What Christ, the very Son of God, did was good enough for Paul, so he did not hesitate to tell the Galations that this rule for conduct was not his own. The liberty from the law and dependence upon the Spirit as guide was the liberty 'wherewith Christ hath made us free.' This was his first and main reason for believing that he was right in his teaching and for insisting on its observance whatever the risks involved with egotistical men.

2. The other reason that Paul hints at in this Epistle for taking the Spirit as guide in morals is that this is the only way to rouse moral initiative in the world. Arthur Bryant maintains that the British Empire came into being, not as a result of national or planned governmental effort, but as the by-product of the enterprise of innumerable private individuals. There was the case of James Brooke who went on a voyage of exploration to Borneo, became the Rajah of Sarawak and added it to the British Empire despite the reluctance of an embarrassed Government to have it. This is exactly how all moral advances are made in the world. They are due to the initiative of individuals, not institutions. When a great evil rears its head, it is some inspired individual like Amos or Malachi who sees that it is not in accord with the mind of God and, brooking all unpopularity and opposition from institutions, including even the Church at times, gradually educates the public conscience to carry the day in the end. Evils like child labour and slavery caused men no pang of conscience for years. Even such a Church leader as Luther declared that if any one said slavery was unchristian he was a liar. It was not institutions but individuals like Wilberforce and Shaftesbury who saw how contrary these devilish things were to the mind of Christ and gave a moral lead against them that was both unpopular and bitterly opposed. At the present time, and in days to come, men will be roused against evils in like manner by the initiative of individuals, for it is with individuals that all needed reform begins. But where do such individuals derive their moral initiative? How do they become certain that a particular practice is contrary to the mind of Christ when the rest of the world accepts it without demur? Why are they so sure of their ground despite all bitter opposition? This moral initiative springs from no external laws but from the Holy Spirit taking possession of such men. Paul indicates that here. He tells the Galatians of an incident when he was amongst them. Peter had come down and fraternised with them without insisting on their observing Jewish laws about eating or anything else. But when other Jewish Christians came from Jerusalem, Peter reversed his attitude. Paul was angered

by this conduct and took Peter to task. Perhaps Simon had been an apostle longer than himself and had an intimacy with Jesus in the days of His flesh he had never known, yet in this matter Paul was certain Peter was wrong. But where did the guidance, of which he had no doubt, in this question of morals spring from? Paul reveals the secret when he says in this chapter, 'we live in the Spirit.' Because he saw that if there was to be moral initiative on the part of individuals in all ages, as there must be if there is to be any social advance, this was the other reason why he was so certain that the Spirit must be the guide in all moral questions.

Luke informs us in the Acts that when Paul visited any Christian community the first thing he asked was, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' To the Apostle this was the cardinal thing for every Christian to experience as so much followed from it. In the Galatians his purpose is to show the Christian Church that this supreme gift that God is willing to impart to all believers who ask Him is the one way in which we can know the mind of Christ in an ever-changing world. In an age like ours when men are bewildered by the rapidity with which change is taking place is there any more salutary truth which needs to be sounded in Christian ears?

JOHN L. RIACH.

The Heart of Religion

Gal. v. 6.—'Faith which worketh by love.'

1. THESE few words indicate the nature of religion and clearly reveal the nature of the Christian religion. It ought not, in these days, to be necessary—and yet it is necessary—that people should be reminded of what religion really is, and of what the Christian religion really is—of what it is always, everywhere, under all circumstances, modes or denominations. For there are things which are described as religion which have little or nothing to do with it. 'Every school,' said Emile Burnouf, 'which does not formally recognize a god is unable to form a religion.'

To many this must seem like a barren truism. Of course, they say, there can be no religion without a god. But it is becoming a fashion to describe as religion phases of human life which, as such, are quite independent of a Divine idea. The fiery passions which flamed with such devastating fury at the French Revolution are held by its great historians to be a religion. Socialism receives this designation from some, and so does art. 'Some people,' said Matthew Arnold, 'are for calling all high thought and feeling by the name of religion, according to that saying of Goethe, "He who has art and science has religion." But,' said Arnold, 'let us use words as mankind generally uses them.'

There are some who charge the ministers of religion with intolerance and bigotry because they may say, of some scientific agnostic, or of some one who 'is an excellent husband and father and very nice indeed, with no vices and most agreeable and indeed decidedly clever,' that he is not religious. Why, he may not have the smallest intention of being religious! For religion is not merely assent to the existence of God or of powers superior to those of man with which man is in contact. Religion is the realization of such a Divine Presence in the life of the intellect, the emotions, and the will. Religion is not merely an intellectual perception. It is a personal, dominating, spiritual experience. Religion, from its lowest to its highest development, consists in the recognition of a power or entity superior to man; in the feelings which the nature or character of this superior power produces within the man; and in the conduct or cult outside the man which these feelings compel him to perform. Realized religion always involves, whatever the religion, a creed, a corresponding emotion, and an accordant practice. It is all these three in a unity indivisible, and not in any one of them alone.

2. The three elements which constitute religion are indicated in the text. 'Faith' points to a creed; 'love' to the feeling or emotion; 'working' to the practical outcome of this emotion—'Faith which worketh by love.' But the feeling, the emotion, is the element that deserves to be held as the innermost soul of religion, fusing by its vital heat the other two elements into an indivisible unity. For this reason: You can have either

of the other two alone, but you cannot have the feeling, the emotion alone.

Certainly there may be a creed without religion and there may be admirable moral conduct without religion. But there cannot be a genuine feeling which is not a feeling towards something, which is not addressed to some object. So that feeling, emotion, necessarily implies an object. Feeling must have a creed. And it must produce a certain conduct. Feeling is the motor of action. Love must live for its object. And so it is truly said, 'If a man love me, he will keep my commandments.'

¶ Mill confessed that the soul of religion is feeling. His words are, 'The essence of religion is the strong, earnest direction of the emotions towards an ideal recognized as of the highest excellence.' And Sabatier said, 'Emotion in fact is the very life of religion.'

But there are very sensible people—very English people—who are at least suspicious of what they call emotional religion. By emotional religion they mean something sentimental, extravagant, or hysterical. But because there are sickly and emasculating emotions, it does not follow that all our emotions are sickly and emasculating. Is the love of parents for their children, or of a patriot for his country, ignoble because it is an emotion? Religion as an emotion—implying as it necessarily does, an object and a practical manifestation—is akin to the love of beauty in its many modes. Notwithstanding the pontifical oracle of Dr Johnson, 'Intercourse between God and the human soul cannot be poetical,' it is akin to noble poetry and finds one of its most congenial modes of expression in poetry. The psalm and the hymn are religion's native tongue, which finds its noblest expression in the prayers of Christ and in the Psalms of David. There are in the Bible old fascinating histories and lofty morality; the statesman's forecasts and the theologian's deductions. But Christ praying and David praising are religion indeed, and for evermore. Open the Psalter by chance, and one's heart begins to beat more quickly and light to glow in the eyes. 'I will magnify Thee, O God, my King, and I will praise Thy name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and worthy to be praised. There is no end of His greatness. O praise God in His holiness; praise Him in the firmament of His Power. For this God is our God for ever and ever, He shall be our guide unto death.' Here is religion, playing upon its harp for joy. And if we would behold religion in an hour of awful suspense we must take our place at the Last Supper, and watch in the Garden of Gethsemane.

But it is said by some who do not want religion or who try to apologize for the absence of it from their special friends, 'We are quite content with the life of Christ.' We are told that 'the life of Christ is religion enough for any man. He was innocent and benevolent; and what can we have better than that?' To be like Christ would be to have the highest religion attainable by man, religion complete in the three elements of which we have spoken. But the actions of Christ's daily life cannot be separated from the faith on which it rested, and the love which inspired it. Agnostical was He? Impossible! Here are His words on agnosticism: 'Holy Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee.' If men take Christ as their ideal they must take His religion also. He had no life apart from God. In spiritual exaltation and in mortal agony His soul was fastened upon God. His last cry was, 'into thy hands I commend my Spirit.' There are those who, while they profess to believe all the articles of the Christian creed, are not religious. Their *realized* God is not the living God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Orthodoxy is their God, and orthodoxy as a realized God is a dead god, which strikes with chill the hearts of its worshippers, and offers an intellectual formula for the salvation of the soul. Why are they not religious, these strong pillars of ecclesiastical parties? Because they are without the emotion which is the vital force of religion, 'the faith working through love.' To such it may be said, 'I know that ye have not the love of God in you.' For the Divine voice which ever sounds, but which we do not always hear or heed, is not, 'Give me thy orthodoxy, thy formal plan of salvation, thy Catholic Church, thy philosophy or thy system of ethics.' It is, 'My son, give me thy heart.'

¶ There is an opinion which may be said simply to identify religion with orthodoxy, with the holding for true what is true. No doubt right doctrine is a very important matter, but does that make it religion? Put it to the religious consciousness, and the answer is, No. It is the belief 'with the heart' that is wanted;

and where that is not, religion is not. Else even the very devils would be religious; for they, as we are told, go further even than is required of them, and add to orthodoxy the fear of God.[1]

Our Response to Truth

Gal. v. 7.—'Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?'

When truth presents itself to us, what should be our appropriate response? It is a question worth studying, especially in relation to the truth of life revealed to us in the gospel.

'If we can only make men intelligent enough and teach them to think,' says the educator, 'the greater part of the world's problems will be solved.' Two quotations will help to show the insufficiency of this point of view. 'Perhaps there is something to be done with truth besides discovering it,' says Professor John Erskine. And Calvin Coolidge: 'Mere intelligence is not enough. Enlightenment must be accompanied by that moral power which is the product of home and of religion.'

1. What are we to do with truth when it comes to us? We can do more than one thing. We can give it a place in our mental furniture. We can range it amongst our stock of beliefs. But is this enough? Would not truth so dealt with judge us at the day of crisis? Truth is surely given for something more than acceptance, more than admiration, more even than repetition to other persons. There must always be an embodiment of the truth in an activity.

This is what St Paul means when he speaks of 'obeying the truth.' He would summon men to believe the truth, and then to give it its appropriate expression in life. One of the dangers of a credal religion is that the holding of a certain form of belief may be made unconsciously a substitute for the working out of that creed in life. A man may be a professor of Christianity, and yet fail to be a practiser of Christianity. We must, above all things, obey the truth. Truth requires not only to be believed, but to be done. Let us consider the reasons for this.

(1) In the first place, obedience to truth is the way to acquire further revelations of truth. F. W. Robertson, in a famous assize sermon, says, 'Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge.' That is the principle laid down by our Lord, when He said, 'If any man will do . . . he shall know.' This universe is governed by laws. At the bottom of everything here there is a law. Things are in this way and not that: we call that a law or condition. All departments have their own laws. By submission to them you make them your own. Obey the laws of the body, and then its prizes are yours. Obey the laws of your spiritual being, and it has its prizes too. The condition of certainty in truth is obedience to the will of God.

¶ Horace Bushnell had been long in a state of uncertainty and bewilderment, in which he had prayed passionately for light: and still the light came not. One day he turned upon himself and asked: 'What is the use of my trying to get further knowledge, so long as I do not yield cheerfully to what I already know?' And kneeling, he prayed after this manner: 'O God, I believe there is an eternal difference between right and wrong, and I hereby give myself up to do the right and to refrain from the wrong. I believe that Thou dost exist, and if Thou canst hear my cry and wilt reveal Thyself to me, I pledge myself to do Thy will, and I make this pledge fully, freely, and for ever.' And from that day Bushnell was led increasingly into the truth, and came to see clearly where formerly he had but groped, blindly and dimly.[1]

The Master's own life furnishes a concrete illustration of this fundamental principle. He based the accuracy of His knowledge and the righteousness of His judgment on the fact that He sought to do the will of God. 'My judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.' Obedience to the will of God put Him in full possession of the truth of God. The same principle is implied, on the other hand, by St Paul, when he says, 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: . . . and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.'

So, then, for the Christian who would advance in the knowledge of the Lord the road to be followed is the way of obedience to that which one already knows. We must, at any cost,

[1] F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 300.

[1] G. H. Williams.

follow the gleam, however dimly at first sight it may seem to glow.

It were not hard, we say, to serve Him,
If we could only see.
It were not hard, Christ says, to see Him,
If we would only serve.
He that doeth the will of Heaven,
To him shall knowledge and truth be given,
And his faith shall never swerve.
It were not hard, Christ says, to see Him,
If we would only serve.

(2) But there is another reason for the conviction that truth must not only be believed, but also obeyed. Obedience to the truth of God is the only way to express our love of God; it is also a sure way of learning to love God. 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me,' says the Master. And His commandments are truths embodied in precepts. If obedience is the organ of knowledge, it is also the organ of love.

Or, again, we say we want to love God. We know this is the first and great Commandment of the law. But we find it difficult to compel love. How shall we make ourselves love God? Well, one way is to go out and do the truth which God speaks to us. The fact is that obedience, the obedience which is the active side of faith, both springs from love and leads to fulness of love. 'If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'

2. We have spoken about obedience to truth, but, with Pilate, we may enquire 'What is truth?'

The fact is that the truth we have in mind is no abstract body of truth or list of truths. It is something very concrete. We remember that our Lord said of Himself, 'I am the truth.' We do not believe Him only because in His utterances He speaks what is in accordance with fact; we do not follow Him only because He presents us the truth; but we trust Him and follow Him because He is Himself the Truth. He is in Himself 'that ultimate reality which men have always sought in a world of fleeting, changing forms.' Once again we are brought up against the unique thing that the Christian life is intensely personal, in the sense of having to do directly with a Person. Obedience to the truth therefore, in our spiritual life, comes to mean obedience to Him. And if we believe Him we shall love Him. And if we love Him we shall obey Him. 'Belief,' 'Love,' 'Obedience.' At root they are in the spiritual life almost indistinguishable. It is all the same thing underneath. *Love* is the heart side of *belief*, the inner side. *Obey* is the life side of *belief*, the outer, the action side. If we love we must obey. For love is not only a union of two hearts, it is the music of two wills acting together, and this, on our side, is what we mean by obedience.

The Offence of the Cross

Gal. v. 11.—'Then is the offence of the cross ceased.'

The question is often asked to-day: Why is it that the Christian Church has not made more progress in converting the world to Christianity? One answer which is often given is this, that there is something wrong with the Church itself—with its organizations, its methods, or its membership. No doubt there is truth in this. But surely there is one other reason. It is this: that there is something in the Church's divine message which runs counter to certain deeply rooted tendencies and characteristics in the human heart and will and mind. The New Testament writers—particularly Paul—describe this as 'the offence of the cross.'

What exactly constitutes this 'offence of the Cross'? Wherein does it consist?

1. The Cross is offensive, because it brings home to men, in such a vivid, forceful way as nothing else can do, the fact of their personal sin, and what it really means in its ultimate implications. Jesus Christ's crucifixion took place because of certain factors which are quite intelligible and recognizable. Dr H. S. Coffin states them thus: the self-righteous Pharisees; the wealthy Sadducean priests who inherited commercial privileges; Pontius Pilate, who wanted to keep the peace; Herod Antipas, a gay man of the world; Judas Iscariot, a disillusioned idealist; the mob; the soldiers; the public. Now the message of the Cross asks us to believe that these factors which crucified Jesus Christ—religious intolerance, commercial privilege, political expedience,

pleasure-loving irresponsibility, unfaithfulness, the mob spirit, militarism, public apathy—were not confined to Jesus Christ's own day and generation, but are present and active in our present-day society. It is not difficult to get men to admit this; for the evidence of the facts is so glaring and obvious. But the preaching of the Cross goes further, and asks us to admit that such factors are also present within us. The preaching of the Cross asks us to admit that the motives and feelings of the men who sent Jesus to His Cross have been and are our own. But it is just this that some men and women will not admit.

¶ One of the notable works of that great Dutch painter of the seventeenth century, Rembrandt, is an etching of the Crucifixion. As we look closely at the shadowy figures behind the Cross we discern that one of those helping to crucify Jesus is Rembrandt himself.

2. Secondly—and this is closely connected with the first—the Cross gave great offence because it reduced all human righteousness to filthy rags. It still continues to give offence for the same reason. For there is a deep-seated desire in the human heart—especially in matters spiritual—to take nothing for nothing, but instead, to do something in order to deserve the gift of salvation as a reward. Such a return may take the form of a ceremonial keeping of an outward rule of conduct. One of the best-known examples of this, of course, was that of the Pharisees of Jesus Christ's day. It is only fair to admit that the Law, which the Pharisees of Jesus Christ's day attempted to obey, took some keeping. Jesus Christ Himself, always fair even to those who opposed Him, admitted this: for example, in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican in which the Pharisee says—quite truthfully—'I fast thrice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess.' This was obviously not a lax or easy rule of life. But it was carried out in order to merit or deserve salvation.

There is another example of this idea of meriting or deserving salvation, which is more frequently met with in our day. Men argue that since they have lived respectable lives and have done their best according to their lights, God cannot condemn them. In any case they do not want salvation on other terms—they will take nothing for nothing.

The truth is, as Dr J. D. Jones has pointed out, that 'God's method of redeeming men hurt their pride.' 'What shall we do,' said the Jews, 'that we may work the works of God?' That is it—we want to *do* something, to feel that we can earn our acceptance and redemption. But the truth is, that we can do nothing to earn it—we have just got to accept it as a gift.

¶ I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian church has ever suffered, has been the effort of men to earn, rather than to receive, their salvation; and that the reason that preaching is so commonly ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them.[1]

> Not the labours of my hands
> Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
> Could my zeal no respite know,
> Could my tears for ever flow,
> All for sin could not atone:
> Thou must save, and Thou alone.

3. The Cross is an offence to many, because it levels all artificial distinctions. There were many such distinctions and divisions in the world into which Jesus Christ was born, and in which He was crucified. For example, there were national, racial, and political divisions between Jews and Gentiles. The Jews were proud of their unique revelation of God and their distinctively religious history; and in consequence they despised the Gentiles as 'lesser breeds without the Law,' definitely inferior to themselves. Similarly, there was a sharp distinction drawn in that first-century world by the Greeks—with their traditions of culture and civilization—between themselves and all others, who were lumped together under the name of 'barbarians.'

There were also social and economic distinctions between different classes, principally of course between freemen and slaves. For slavery was rampant in the Græco-Roman world of Jesus Christ's day: indeed, slavery was the economic basis on which society rested.

The Cross of Jesus Christ levelled all these artificial distinctions. As Dr James Denney once put it, 'all are made in the same divine image, all are redeemed by the same divine sacrifice, and all are called to the same divine destiny.'

Now the modern world, like the world of the

[1] Ruskin.

first century, is riven by man-made distinctions. There are, for example, national distinctions, which seem to be becoming more pronounced and acute. There are racial distinctions, and these, too, seem to be becoming more acute. There are economic distinctions between employers and employed, or, more generally, between what are known as the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.' There are also social distinctions between class and class. And the message of the Cross wages fierce war against them all. And still the reaction of many, who deem themselves superior, on account of their descent or wealth or social position, is distinctly hostile to such a message as the Cross brings.

¶ It has been remarked that the appeal of John Wesley and his Methodists in the eighteenth century and later was mainly to the lower middle and artisan classes. To the upper classes it was frankly unintelligible. And why? Because, as Mr W. E. Gladstone once said, the Methodist movement was 'a strong, systematic, determined, and outspoken reaction against the prevailing standards both of life and preaching. It aimed at bringing back on a large scale, and by an aggressive movement, the Cross, and all that the Cross essentially implies.'

4. There is a further objection to the Cross which was met in the first century, and which is even more potent to-day. It is this: that sacrificial love such as Jesus Christ exhibited on the Cross seemed, and still seems, to many to be nothing but the defeat of weakness by strength, and the exposure of foolishness by prudence. That is to say, the world into which Jesus Christ was born believed most deeply that the overcoming way of life was the way of physical conquest. This 'hard pagan world,' as Matthew Arnold called it, had no time or place for such virtues as Jesus Christ not merely praised and commended but actually exhibited and practised—particularly in that last dreadful week which culminated in His crucifixion.

Within little more than three centuries the Christian Church, glorifying in the Cross and living the life of the crucified Jesus, conquered completely the Roman Empire which was based on force and physical power. The Christian virtues — apparently so pathetically weak — were in fact and practice much stronger, much more powerful, than the apparently strong virtues of the mighty Roman Empire.

In spite of this fact, in spite of this plain teaching of history, many in the modern world have as little time and place for those virtues which Jesus Christ enjoined and practised supremely on the Cross as their counterparts in the Roman Empire of the first century. For example, Nietzsche, the well-known German philosopher of the nineteenth century, believed the Christian values and virtues—as embodied supremely in the Cross — meant decadence, degeneration, and death. Not merely did such an eccentric genius as Nietzsche find the Cross distasteful; but several modern English literary men—notably Mr H. G. Wells and Mr G. B. Shaw—have taken a similar point of view, though they have not pushed it to such wild and passionate extremes as Nietzsche did. For example, Mr Wells, for his God, demands—not a crucified prisoner on a Cross—but a figure full of joy and victorious life. In his book *God the Invisible King* he pictures God as a youthful warrior who leads men to unbroken triumph.

Not only has the Christian Cross and gospel been despised in theory in the modern world. It has been similarly rejected in practice. This is seen to-day in the widespread assumption that might is right, that worldly success is the proof of value, and that God is always on the side of the biggest battalions.

These, then, are four of the facts which help to make up what Paul calls the 'offence of the cross.' Quite clearly, they are just as widespread and prevalent to-day as they were in Paul's day. They help to account for the comparative lack of success of the Christian Church in redeeming the world. The way of the Cross is the power of God unto salvation for men, both individually and collectively. It is the bounden duty of disciples of Jesus Christ who believe in His Cross to put it into practice, not merely in their personal lives, but in their social and corporate relationships. 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ, my Lord.'

The Problem of Freedom

Gal. v. 13.—'For ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.'

THE battle for freedom was the central matter in the life of St Paul. At white heat he discusses

it in the Epistle to the Galatians. In a more measured and formal manner it dominates his thought in the Epistle to the Romans. Paul belonged to that great company who had found that life was chaining them. His hands were bound; his mind was bound; his conscience was bound. And long before he was able to analyse or understand his own restlessness he was passionately longing for some great and satisfying experience of escape. To him Christianity was essentially an emancipation, and Jesus Christ was first of all the great emancipator. 'With freedom did Christ make you free,' he exulted, as he wrote to disciples whom he had won for the Invisible Master.

1. The fights for liberty stand among the supreme struggles of the race. Sometimes they have to do with political liberty and glow with the light of many a heroic charge and the patient courage of many a long campaign. Sometimes they have to do with moral and spiritual freedom, and tell the tale of the lonely human spirit struggling with the supreme matters of destiny. Sometimes they have to do with the freedom of the mind, and lead us to great libraries where, in bloodless conflict, daring scholars and thinkers win the rights of the uncoerced intellect.

In all these fields we read the tale with glowing enthusiasm, and as we read we come to feel more and more the majesty of freedom. Mr Coupland, in his graphic and understanding narrative of the life of Wilberforce, tells a story of one electric night in the House of Commons, when the patient and skilful leader was at last to see the fruition of his long-deferred hopes. His passion against the slave trade had become the passion of England, and it was at last to crystallize into Parliamentary action. One speaker, at the climax of the evening, referred to Napoleon, who was then a prisoner at Saint Helena, and contrasted the fashion in which the great Emperor, with his memories of bloodshed and the bitter tragedy which he had brought all over Europe, would seek his couch for slumber, and the glad consciousness of a new hope for numberless forlorn men and women who had no voice of their own, which Wilberforce would carry to his pillow that night. The rafters of the building echoed with such thunderous applause as had not been heard in the House of Commons for a generation, while Wilberforce sat with his face in his hands, the tears running down his cheeks. The men who make way for freedom do not always receive such public recognition, but they serve one of the supreme causes in all the world. 'Ye were called for freedom,' writes Paul to the Galatians. And, indeed, his whole career was a succession of campaigns for the moral and spiritual liberation of the human spirit.

2. The achievement of freedom, however, is not the end, but only the very beginning of the far journey. For freedom itself must be mastered by moral and spiritual passion or it may become a great enemy instead of a powerful friend. Once and again Paul found that the new freedom was being prostituted and becoming an ugly licence. Dark vices crept in under its name. Paul was never more sternly in earnest than when he wrote: 'Use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh.' We all know that the flesh and the whole material world can be so shot through with moral and spiritual meaning that they have a noble sacramental value. On the other hand the flesh and, indeed, every material aspect of life may be untouched by moral sanctions or by spiritual beauty. Indeed, they may be the vehicle of all which is directly opposed to moral and spiritual values. Seen so, the flesh becomes the very symbol of all that is dark and evil. And so Paul often uses the word. The freedom which surrenders to the impulse which has never felt the control of a moral ideal soon becomes a completely disintegrating and destructive thing. If freedom only means the surrender to every lawless passion it is on the road to the most intolerable sort of slavery. And yet this is just the mistake which lovers of liberty seem to find it hardest to avoid. It haunts the ways of men in every age. The old vices are always appearing in the garments of new liberties. The contemplation of this sad *dénouement* of fair hopes of freedom in many a century has taught the surest and deepest thinkers the menace of that very liberty which they love. And no man understood this aspect of the difficult and baffling problem more thoroughly than the Apostle Paul.

¶ The sense of the menace of freedom has led many men to distrust democracy. Alexander Hamilton, the American statesman, and his circle really feared the people. They had no faith in the popular mind. They suspected

its activities. They believed that by subtle intrigue it must be guided. They desired the new republic to be a government 'of gentlemen, by gentlemen, for the people.' They did not understand that the very genius of a true liberty is to train and develop common men so that they shall be capable of making great decisions and bearing the burden of great responsibilities.

3. But Paul the Apostle also knew the solution of the problem very many centuries ago. In one tremendous sentence he sets it forth, and we must translate his words literally. They are these: 'Be enslaved to each other in love.' Let us hold the whole paradox—so like a Chesterton before the days of Chesterton—in our minds. Paul says in effect: 'You are called in order that you may be free. And the way to be free is to be the slaves of love.' Here we come upon the transfiguration of freedom. You watch a mother as the late night moves on towards the early morning bending over a child whose life seems to be ebbing with the passing night. She is doing battle with the very forces of death. She is a veritable slave to the tiny child for whose life she is contending. Does she feel a sullen anger that she must spend such tense and terrible hours bending over the suffering babe? How she would scorn the thought! The slavery of love is perfect freedom. Here is a man who suddenly comes upon the opportunity of making a great sacrifice for a friend to whom he has been deeply devoted for many years with no adequate opportunity to express that devotion. He spends himself for his friend with a kind of eager joy. The sacrifice is not sacrifice. It is joyful singing. Love has changed an intolerable burden into a happy privilege. To do a thing because you must, with a sense of hard coercion in the doing, is always a bitter experience. But to do a thing because you love to do it puts a heart of freedom and gladness into the most painful service.

There is such a thing as the deliberate and impassioned slavery to truth. Witness Charles Darwin with infinite patience collecting and classifying data over a score of years. There is such a thing as the deliberate and impassioned slavery to goodness. Witness the lyrical self-sacrifice of St Francis. There is such a thing as the deliberate and impassioned slavery to Jesus Christ. Witness the life of joyous and devoted daring of St Paul himself. And in such impassioned and determined slavery to truth and goodness and the God whose face they have seen in the face of Christ men have found the most actual freedom.

¶ Sir Wilfred Grenfell, loving the fisher folk of Labrador, and devoting his life to their service, remarks that he dislikes to speak of self-sacrifice, for he cannot recall that he ever has indulged in it. So Livingstone, passionately desiring the salvation of Africa, could write: 'People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. . . . It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege.' [1]

The Way of Deliverance

Gal. v. 16.—'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.'

1. THERE are many battlefields in life. But the hottest is that which most of us carry within. The most difficult thing to control is the management of our own nature. How to control these instincts which are the raw material of life—that is the most common problem. And many who have mastered other parts of life carry about continually the sense of inner defeat.

We try various methods of dealing with those dark forces that strain at the leash within us. Some try the way of repression. They shut up those desires in some secret cellar of the mind and try to forget that they are there. But they are never safe. They never know when in some unguarded moment that secret door which they are keeping closed may not spring open and the unholy thing break out. There is no real victory over evil merely in repression, in holding things down—the chained tiger and the captive ape. Others try the way of struggle, of fighting against the enemy that lurks within. But all such effort only serves to give the besetting passion a stronger power.

2. St Paul's secret lies in finding a new world to live in—the world of the Spirit. The power of what is called environment is well known. Take a child out of evil surroundings, where he is constantly met by suggestions that appeal to

[1] H. E. Fosdick.

his lower nature, and place him in different surroundings, where beauty and goodness and love call out what is best in him, and you may have a changed life. Perhaps we long for some such thing to happen to ourselves. If only we were in some different kind of office, or had fresh companionships, or a more favourable set of circumstances, life would be different. We should, we imagine, escape from our temptations.

Now, that is exactly what Paul suggests. He bids us walk in the world of the Spirit and cease dwelling in the world of the flesh. What we forget is that it is not necessary to change our surroundings in order to change our environment. That may sound strange. But think it out. Two people may be living in the same external world, dwelling in the same home, working in the same office, walking in the same street, meeting the same people, and yet they may be living in entirely different worlds. The one may have a fleshly, material mind and outlook. He sees in things what makes appeal to his selfishness or to the grosser side of life. That kind of suggestion is there. It calls to him and he responds. He fulfils the lusts of the flesh. The other has the spiritual mind. In the same people and the same surroundings he finds an appeal to his spirit. He sees men and women as God's children, our brothers and sisters for whom Christ died. He sees in business an opportunity of service. He finds in all around him what awakens reverence or heroism or sympathy or faith. He seeks the guiding of the Spirit of God in everything. He is living in God. The material world has become what it is in reality—the medium of the spiritual, the world in which God is Father and Christ is Lord. He walks in the Spirit, responding to His challenge and appeals. The lusts of the flesh, the lower appeals, are crowded out. They have no place in that new world into which Christ leads us.

¶ Infinite toil would not enable you to sweep away a mist, but by ascending a little, you may afterwards look over it altogether. So it is with our moral improvement; we wrestle fiercely with a vicious habit which would have no hold upon us if we ascended into a higher moral atmosphere. It is by adding to our good purposes and nourishing the affections which are rightly placed, that we shall be able to combat the bad ones.[1]

[1] Sir Arthur Helps.

¶ Pastor Shee, the founder of the Christian Church in North China, was, for many years, an opium addict, prisoner to a habit which the medical profession agree to be the most difficult to break in the world. Yet Shee broke free from its domination. How did he do it? Here are his own words: 'For twenty years I was prepared to sell my soul, or a hundred souls, if I had them, for one ounce of opium. But God is love. I saw the larger truth of what Christ wants a man to be. I saw as in a vision the beauty of self-victory. I filled my thought with that truth. I rose again from the dead. I am free.' [1]

3. The psychologist explains this process in his way and commends it. He calls it sublimation. Paul discovered it long ago. The only real way of deliverance from the power of the lower nature is by finding new channels for its forces. For these forces in themselves are not evil. It is when they find the wrong channels, the channels of selfishness and sensual pleasure, that they become destructive. Paul had found a way in which they could be mastered and yet liberated. They could be kept from degrading his life, and yet could find a vital place in it.

But he had a secret which psychology can never give. He had found in Christ the road into this new world and the power to walk in it. Christ had awakened him to see the things of the Spirit in all around him. He had given him a new interest in people, a new value for them as God's children. It was unthinkable that he should use them as the tools of passion or selfishness. There had come a new outlook on the world as the gift of God which kept him from misusing or degrading it. He had a new vision of his work as the gateway of service of the Kingdom, so that he could never make it merely the means of gain or selfish ambition. He had learned to walk in the Spirit.

Christ's way of deliverance is in leading us into this new world. That is His power. Walking in the Spirit becomes the habit of daily life. It means first having our eyes opened to see the spiritual. That is what conversion really means. It is the spiritual miracle of opening blind eyes. It happened to the prodigal when he came to himself and saw the father's home as his own real world. When he had seen that, the far country lost all the glamour that was

[1] Alistair Maclean, *The Quiet Heart*, 121.

left. Its appeal had gone. The lusts of the flesh were dead. They awakened no response from his new heart.

But walking in the Spirit means the constant effort to keep in that world. It is not easy. It takes the habit of prayer, taking time for quietness and for listening to God till the glamour of the material dies out, and the beauty of the spiritual, the real, is able to take fresh hold of our hearts. It needs the daily discipline of obedience. But as we walk with Christ there, learning of Him, seeing life and people with His eyes, responding to His guiding, the spiritual world becomes our home. We become its children, its citizens. The evil in things loses its power of appeal. 'We are delivered from the power of darkness,' because we are 'translated into the Kingdom' in which Christ is King.

¶ In many churches on the Continent of Europe we find the walls covered with frescoes by the great masters. They generally depict some scene from the story of Jesus. These pictures are not there merely to decorate the church. They are there to transfer themselves to the minds of the worshippers, so that through them the power of evil may be broken and overcome.[1]

O Jesus Christ, grow Thou in me,
And all things else recede;
My heart be daily nearer Thee,
From sin be daily freed.[2]

The Fruit of the Spirit

Gal. v. 22, 23.—'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.'

In the paragraph from which these words are taken the Apostle is drawing a contrast between life in the flesh and life in the Spirit. 'Flesh' must not be understood as if it meant just the physical substance of these bodies of ours. In the Apostle's use of it 'flesh' is not so much a material as an ethical and doctrinal term. It is the lower, baser, sinful side of this human nature of ours. And that side exists in all of us as we know only too well. But there is also a higher side to this human nature of ours. And between these two sides of our human nature there rages ceaseless war—'the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.'

That is true of every one. But this letter is written specifically to Christian people. And the mark of the Christian was that he had received the Holy Spirit and lived by its power. The Spirit, that is to say, to the Christian man, was not simply some vague aspiration after higher things—it was the very life and power of God within him. But it was possible for men who professed to have received the Spirit to live in the sphere of the flesh.

1. 'The works of the flesh . . . the fruit of the Spirit.' There is significance in that variation of words: '*Works* of the flesh . . . *fruit* of the Spirit.' 'Works' suggests something made, produced, artificially fabricated. Works are not the offspring of life. Every *made* thing is dead. Man has been able to produce some marvellous things. We gaze with something like awe at the mighty buildings he erects. We stand fascinated before some of the machinery his brain and his hand have produced. But, wonderful though his inventions and creations are, there is one thing he has never been able to create, and that is *life*. All his works—however vast and wonderful—are dead things. And that is why the Apostle uses the word of the effects of yielding to fleshly impulse. 'If ye live after the flesh,' he says in one place, 'ye shall die.' These works of the flesh which he enumerates here, 'fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery,' and so on, are the enemies of life, they are dead things and deadly things, and they carry the seeds of death within themselves.

But the '*fruit* of the Spirit,' and fruit is found only where there is life. An apple-tree or a pear-tree must be alive if it is to give golden fruit in the autumn. Now, the Spirit is just the life of God in the soul. The Spirit is a vitalizing power and, as a result, where the Spirit is there is fruit, and the presence of the Spirit is known by the fruit it produces: 'the *fruit* of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,' and so on.

And the Apostle meant something also when he described the result of yielding to the flesh as 'works' (plural), and the issue of life in and by the Spirit as 'fruit' (singular). 'Works' are dead things and there is no coherence or

[1] James Reid, *Where the New World Begins*, 227.
[2] J. C. Lavater.

cohesion in dead things. The works of the flesh disintegrate the character. There is no unity in death. The man who yields to the flesh becomes the victim of various appetites and lusts—'The *works* of the flesh.' But the 'fruit' of the Spirit—because all these virtues grow out of the presence of the Spirit like, let us say, a cluster of grapes on the same stem. It is not a case of the Spirit in one man revealing itself in *love*, and in another man in *joy*, and in another man in *kindness*, and in another in *self-control*. All these virtues grow out of the one stem. They all spring from the one life.

2. The Apostle sets forth nine attributes of the Christian life, all the fruit of the Spirit, and all capable of being exercised in everyday life.

(1) *Love*, of course, heads the list. It is the primal demand of the Christian faith. Our Lord Himself approved of that answer of the scribe who summed up the law in the double command to love God and love one's neighbour. On the night on which He was betrayed, Jesus said to His disciples, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another,' and He added that, by the fact that they loved one another, people would know that they were His disciples. St Paul declared that love was the fulfilling of the law, and that, without love, faith to remove mountains would profit nothing; while St John has set it down 'that he that loveth is born of God and knoweth God, and he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.' The Christian life is one that is characterized by love and it is no use pretending that we have the Spirit of Christ at all unless we love.

(2) The second fruit of the spirit is *joy*. True religion must always mean a definite access of joy; it must always mean the heightening and deepening of the emotional life. Christ makes His appeal to the whole man; and as religion means the expansion and enrichment of the intellect, and the strengthening and bracing of the will, so also does it mean the exaltation and kindling of the emotions.

'Rejoice alway' is one of the 'standing orders' of the Gospel. And however some of the facts of the Church's history, and certain still current conceptions of religion, may conspire to convey a different impression, the fact remains that the typical New Testament Christian is cheerful, sunny, joyous. We must learn, therefore, to make room in our ideal of Christian character for the virtue of joy.

¶ 'There is no duty we so much underrate,' says Robert Louis Stevenson, 'as the duty of being happy.' 'A happy man or woman,' he continues, 'is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of goodwill, and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted.' Such are the men and women that Christianity is meant to create.

(3) *Peace* is more than peacefulness, but springs from it. The Lord Jesus says, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' The troubled soul which flees to Jesus finds itself at rest in Him. The peace of God becomes a guard to his heart amidst the troubles and disappointments of life, but that gift will show itself in his dealings with others. The nervous irritations to which we seem peculiarly liable in the present age will give way to calmness, though not to inertia or indifference. 'Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another.' So said the Master, and in accordance with this word He lived and acted. And we must do so too, and that in every department of life, social, political, ecclesiastical; as far as possible living peaceably with all men, seeking peace and pursuing it, for, 'Happy are the peacemakers.'[1]

(4) *Longsuffering* is something more than magnanimity; it is rather *longanimity*. It is not breadth of temper so much as length of temper. It is the capacity to present the same calm surface to men to-day, and to-morrow, and morrow after morrow, in spite of anything and everything. It is the power to bear irritating people without being irritated. It is the ability to tolerate even the intolerant. It is long temper as contrasted with short temper; the power of 'bearing all things.'

¶ There is a legend that one day Abraham was standing by his tent door when he saw coming along the way a very old man, weary with his journey, and with bleeding feet. With true hospitality he invited the old man to share his meal and be lodged with him for the night. But he noticed that the old man asked no blessing on the meal, and inquired why he did not pray to the God of heaven. The old man said, 'I am a fire-worshipper and acknowledge

[1] R. B. Girdlestone, *Galatians*, 99.

no other God.' At this, Abraham grew angry that a man should be such an infidel and thrust him out of his tent into the night. Then God called to Abraham and said to him, 'Where is the old man that came to thee?' And Abraham answered, 'I thrust him out because he did not worship Thee.' Then said God, 'I have suffered him these hundred years, though he dishonoured Me—and couldst thou not endure him one night?'

(5) The English word *gentleness* partly covers the meaning, but it hardly goes far enough, as the Greek word marks the kindly disposition which will show itself in active service. It is a social virtue, whereby we can ameliorate many of the troubles which we see around us.

> Dig channels for the streams of love,
> Where they may broadly run;
> And love has overflowing streams,
> To fill them every one.
> For we must share if we would keep
> That good thing from above,
> Ceasing to give, we cease to have;
> Such is the law of love.

(6) If we would realize the full content of this word *goodness* in all its range, we must call to our aid that fascinating list of words beginning with the syllable 'bene.' In 'goodness' are found benevolence, beneficence, benefits. All the wealth accumulated in love and joy and peace in God is to be poured out in active, influential ministry upon our fellow-men.

¶ The goodness which St Paul mentions as a component part of 'the fruit of the Spirit' and which, difficult as it is to dissect and define, we instinctively recognize when we see it, characterized my father in a very high degree. Those who knew him best were most sensible of his goodness; in the intimacies of private life it showed itself even more fully and winsomely than in his public relations and activities. To the very core of him, he was a good man, courteous, sympathetic, considerate, one of 'God's gentlemen,' known as such by all his friends; and not even his enemies—and inevitably he made some enemies for righteousness' sake—ever brought his goodness into doubt.[1]

(7) The next word is *faith*. The rendering of the Revised Version is to be preferred to that of the Authorized, for it is not faith in its theological sense to which the Apostle is here referring. The idea of fidelity is what seems to be intended. St Paul's thought is that the Christian life is to manifest itself in the faithful discharge of all duties and the honest handling of all things committed to it.

(8) Then there is *meekness*. It is the spirit of Him who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, He threatened not. It is not cowardice, for it demands high courage. It makes one willing to take a lower place than one deserves, to be silent about one's merits, and to bear slights, insults, and false accusation 'for the Son of man's sake.'

(9) *Temperance* is a fine thing, but we have come to use it in one relationship only. The better rendering is 'self-control.' Self-control comes last in St Paul's list, not because it is least, or lowest, but because it is the bond of all the rest. Many men attain a good measure of self-control by effort, and none can gain the grace without effort, strenuous and constant. But he who would master himself completely and maintain his control to the end finds that this 'temperance' is a gift of the Spirit. 'Thee o'er thyself I crown and mitre,' said Virgil to Dante, but only when he had triumphantly passed the seven terraces of Purgatory. Man need not wait till then for such high coronation, but the only man who can conquer himself is he in whom the Divine Spirit exercises complete control and sway.

This is no dream of blessings that might be real in a better world than this; it is a vision of things as they are for those in whom the Lord Christ lives; it is a promise for as many as receive Him. The Spirit is here, He works in all who are led by Him, who are the sons of God; and as the works of the flesh are manifest in their grossness, their greed, their falsity, so also are the fruits of the Spirit plain to those who have eyes to see, in their purity, their selflessness, their truth; manifest in the Saints, and in the humblest of the disciples of Jesus; given in germ and potency to us all, and expected of us all by the Divine Husbandman who comes seeking fruit in His vineyard.

¶ Writing of John Buchan, his son Alistair said: 'From this spiritual restraint . . . sprang a force so warm and positive that it changed the air around him. This lack of jealousy and anger, springing not from indifference but from conviction, so pervaded that climate of his mind

[1] H. Varley, *Henry Varley's Life Story*, 238.

and of his conversation, that in his company one forgot the cheap jibe and the vindictive comment.' Such a personality is not created by the mere application of psychological principles; indeed, it is not in the last analysis a human creation at all. The beginnings of the growth of so perfectly poised a character are to be found, most probably, in the manse where, as a boy he offered a boy's loyalty to the Eternal. In the soldier and statesman and author of later years there was the blossom and fruit of the divine Spirit.[1]

The Spirit of Joy

Gal. v. 22.—'But the fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy.'

THE fruit of the Spirit on which we want to concentrate attention is the one the Apostle mentions second, 'The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy.' Without this mark of 'joy,' we haven't got the Spirit—at any rate, not in fulness. It is in this respect we modern Christians are so startlingly different from the Christians of the first century. Nobody, by any stretch of the imagination, could speak of us as a joyous people. Why is that?—for where the Spirit is really present there is an irrepressible gladness. There is only one conclusion—that our religious experiences have not been deep enough. We are much in the condition the disciples were in those days between Easter and Pentecost, when they kept themselves locked in the Upper Room for fear of the Jews. They had the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus to preach about, but they remained dumb. We are much like that. Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Day—we know all about the facts they commemorate. But there has not been a Pentecost in our experience. We have no sense of the Spirit as a triumphant power within us, and so, in face of a hostile world, we are despondent and distressed. Dr Stanley Jones tells a story of a negro woman who, while the minister was unfolding the glorious gospel, kept shouting, 'Glory' and 'Hallelujah.' Some tried to make her keep quiet. 'I can't,' she exclaimed, 'for I's overcharged.' That was the condition of the disciples after Pentecost—they were 'overcharged,' and therefore irrepressible and irresistible. 'To the discomfiture of every one they listened to false accusations in council halls, while their faces shone like those of angels; they departed from judgment halls with bleeding backs, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name; they rejoiced their way through prisons and saluted death with a smile.' And the reason for it all was this: they knew Jesus as a glorious Presence and Power in their soul. So they marched to music. The fruit of the Spirit was . . . joy. And what we want to banish our weakness and our anxieties and our fears is just a similar experience of the Spirit.

What did Pentecost mean for those first disciples?

1. To begin with, it meant this: *Jesus had come back.* Their happiness was only complete when they were with Him and He was with them, and that happiness of theirs was simply dashed to the ground when He said that He was going to leave them. The grief of David over the death of Jonathan, or of Tennyson over the death of Arthur Hallam, was nothing to the grief these disciples felt at the mere prospect of losing Jesus.

When they saw Him on the Cross, their hearts broke. They had lost their dearest and best. Easter, of course, scattered that despair of theirs, for they knew that their Lord was not dead. But Easter didn't give them their Lord back again. During the space of the great Forty Days He appeared now and again, but those were just fleeting appearances. And without Him—even though they knew He was alive—the disciples felt very timid and helpless.

But at Pentecost He came back *to stay.* Pentecost was the fulfilment of His promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' In the person of His Holy Spirit, Jesus ceased to be localized and became universalized. It did not matter where they went, it did not matter in what circumstances they found themselves, Jesus was with them. He was with them, because He was *in* them. For those of us who have sons or daughters in some far-distant part of our Empire it is a great day when the time of furlough comes round and our dear ones come back. But we know they come back only to go away again. Over their weeks or months of furlough there lies the shadow of coming departure. It is pathetic to read how Mary Livingstone longed for the day of Livingstone's return, and how passionately

[1] Leslie F. Church.

she longed for the day when he should return to stay. That is what happened at Pentecost—Jesus came back to stay.

I say to all men, far and near,
That He is risen again;
That He is with us now and here,
And ever shall remain.[1]

2. And the second thing that Pentecost did for these disciples was this: it brought them *the assurance of triumph*. Jesus had laid upon these first disciples of His a tremendous task—they were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation, and they were to begin in the most difficult place of all—at Jerusalem. Easter came, but even the knowledge that their Lord was alive was not sufficient to inspire them to make a start. During those forty days the little church was a church behind closed doors. But when Pentecost came, and they knew that Jesus was with them in the Person of His Spirit, they flung the doors wide open and began preaching their gospel boldly to the assembled pilgrims in Jerusalem. And nothing could daunt them.

They used to say during the American Civil War that the coming of General McClellan was as good as the addition of another battalion to the army—he brought with him a certain confidence of victory. Lord Kitchener had a similar effect on the British folk. When we knew he was at the head of affairs we felt everything would be all right. And his very name was good for a million men. All that, and infinitely more, the coming of the Spirit was to the first disciples. After all, McClellan and Kitchener were no guarantee of victory. The one was superseded and the other died before the victory was won. But the disciples, inspired with this blessed assurance that God was with them, that all the might of God was working through them, flung themselves with a kind of dash and gaiety upon that embattled world. 'The fruit of the Spirit was joy.'

¶ There is a story told about a Highland chief who was struck down in one of the battles fought in the cause of the young Pretender. His clansmen, seeing their chief struck down and believing that he was killed, were beginning to waver and give way, when the wounded man lifted himself on his elbows and cried to them, 'Your chief is not dead: I am watching you to see how you acquit yourselves.' And the story goes on to say that fired by the realization that their chief was not dead, and that his eye was upon them, the clansmen steadied their ranks, plunged again into the thick of the battle and fought with such resistless valour that they swept away the English ranks opposed to them.[1]

Joy multiplies our strength. Dr Hadfield, the great specialist, says that 'we are only as tired as our minds,' which means that tiredness will flee once we realize that we have power adequate to all our needs. And we have that adequate power in the Spirit of God—the Christ, who is with us alway. Joy is not to be manufactured. Multiplication of machinery will never give us that assurance of triumph which will enable us to sing as we move to battle. But if we really let God into our lives and hearts, He will soon demonstrate His own presence. And when we feel His presence then will come the joy.

¶ Dr Stanley Jones tells how the Himalayan villagers, when engaged in weeding their fields, work to music. One of them is beating a drum and all of them are singing. And we shall go to our work with music in our souls and on our lips if we have the Spirit.

The Law of Life

Gal. v. 22, 23.—'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.'

Everybody will admit the beauty of these graces which St Paul significantly calls the fruit or harvest of the Spirit. Everybody feels that they are not so prevalent in the world as we would wish them to be; but whenever we dream of heavens beyond the earth or utopias upon the earth we never fail to give these graces the supreme place. We could not imagine a heaven or a utopia where love, joy, and peace did not rule. It is when we come to the hard facts of life as we have to live it from day to day that we question the power of these things. We confess that they are here in the world, and we are very glad they are here; but they seem to us like delicate blossoms and flowers of life, which may be preserved in some sequestered

[1] *Lyra Germanica.*

[1] J. D. Jones, *Keep Festival*, 160.

place, but which are not the real substance of life.

And it is just there we join issue with Paul. He says that the law of the Spirit is the law of life. Paul was a man whose life was swayed with the idea of law. He always was a law-loving man. There was a time when he strove to keep the law. In those days he was a Pharisee. There came another time when he declared he was not under the law. In those days he was a Christian. Yet in both phases of his experience the law was the central thing in his life, and that which brought him peace and happiness and power as a Christian was to discover that the law of the Spirit was really the law of life. He knew it because there was no reaction against it. When he lived in love and joy and peace, all the old-time opposition of the law seemed to pass away. The bondage was gone. Restraint gave way to harmony. There was no law that was against him.

1. There have always been two types of men. There are those who take what they call a common-sense view of life. They know the value of the graces that Paul exalts. They know the value of love. They want the love of one true heart, whether it be that of a man or a woman. But love in ordinary business life, love in social relationships outside the circle of our own immediate family group—that is not to be expected. They recognize the beauty of joy and covet it. But joy in a world that is so full of sorrow and injustice and all manner of untoward things—it seems absurd to regard it as part of the very stuff of life. Peace? They respect and covet it, but the only way of peace is the way of strength. Goodness? They respect goodness, but so often goodness seems such a weak thing. Kindness? They believe in the law of kindness, but if we are too kind, they say, people will take advantage of us. So with the whole list of these beautiful graces—they confess they are desirable, but altogether too impracticable and unworkable to be accepted as the very substance and law of life.

There is another type of mind, however, which insists that, after all, these are the only things that matter. So there are two ways of looking at the condition of the world. And one must make his choice. He must decide for himself to which class of evidence he will give greater respect; which class of facts he will acknowledge as ruling principles in his life; on which side he will throw his influence in the eternal struggle.

2. Far too many people take what they call 'the common-sense view' of the case; far too many people follow the law of the flesh. We are, in fact, over-developed on the side of the flesh, and under-developed on the side of the spirit.

Take this great thought of love, the most beautiful word in our language. It is scarcely possible to speak of love in these days without feeling sure that the minds of the majority of our hearers are thinking of just one phase in life, that wonderful time when the soul is prepared to take risks and fling itself out without defences in its trust in the love of another. But even that kind of love is not at its best, at its most real point, in the moment of its blossom. The true test of even that kind of love is rather later on in life when the romance has given place to a settled and steady regard and patient understanding through every common day.

Take joy. We all seek joy, but how few people have found the secret of true joy and how much of what we call joy is a hectic thing; a thing that does not exist in its own right, but depends upon something outside itself—money, or position, or some other external element; a precarious thing, likely to be wrecked at any moment.

Take peace. We have not developed the faculty for feeling down under our surface differences for the things that are common and fundamental. Human beings are just human beings, with certain modifications that come about through their history, their climate, their traditions, their religion. These are great things, yet it is possible to get beneath them, and to find that the difference between one people and another is not nearly so great as we had supposed. Human nature is the thing we want to get at, that common factor in our personal, social, and international relationships.

¶ In the German war novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the author tells us that he was once left behind in a shell-hole. A heavy body stumbled and fell in beside him. He struck out. Then he looked at his victim, and spoke: 'Comrade, I did not want to kill you. But you were only an idea to me before, an abstraction that lived in my mind. It was that abstraction

I stabbed. But now for the first time I see you are a man like myself. Now I see your wife and your face and our fellowship. Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are just poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death and the same dying and the same agony? Forgive me, comrade. How could you be my enemy? If we threw away these rifles and this uniform you could be my brother. If I come out of it I shall fight against this that has struck us both down.'

3. The next thought is that most great things such as these fruits of the Spirit are not impossible because they are irrational, but because not enough people believe in them, or strive for them. Love is not irrational, but not enough people love. Joy is not foolish, but not enough people seek true joy. Peace is not irrational, but not enough people seek peace.

But we should all be seeking these things for they are the only things that have survival value. They are recognized as valuable by every normal man. All men, indeed, may be said to desire them. It may be necessary to erect bulwarks and barriers against the lusts of the flesh, but the fruits of the spirit do not come under the condemnation of any reasonable law.

If they are left to themselves, they will supply their own best defence. They do not cry out for assistance from others. They can endure torment. They can suffer obloquy. They can bear in silence whatever afflictions may be forced upon them. Against such there is no law, and for such there need be no law.

In personal and in private life there can be hardly any question of this. Meekness wins its own battles. Temperance argues for itself, by itself. If the moderate man is moderate in speech as well as in deed, if he is temperate in conduct as well as in doctrine, it is not likely that he will require much in the way of guardianship from others. More than once the experiment has been tried in dealing with wild races. Men have found that the best of all weapons has been the genial spirit and the gentle word. Where men armed to the teeth have failed, the Christian evangelist has often succeeded. Races which seemed to be hostile to every kind of moral and religious teaching have nevertheless been subdued by the passion, by the love, for Christ, as they have seen it in the heart and life of one of Christ's disciples. Against such there is no law.

When one goes into the large world of the State and its relations one has to admit that problems are perplexing. It is easy for the Christian minister to dogmatize about certain matters, but even the Christian minister should remember Bacon's counsel: In these things (things political) we are dealing with mixed matters. Concerning such issues, however, a Christian minister can at least say this: that the Church, the Christian society, must always press that side which believes in and works for meekness, temperance, love, joy, peace. It is not even for the Christian churches to say dogmatically that on such and such an issue the only reasonable side is peace; but it is for them to say that by any and every possible method peace must be sought for, striving to make operative and authoritative the qualities which of all others should govern the soul of man. For against these fruits of the Spirit there can be no law.

¶ At the present time when violence, clothed in life, dominates the world more cruelly than it ever has before, I still remain convinced that truth, love, peaceableness, meekness, and kindness are the violence which can master all other violence. The world will be theirs as soon as ever a sufficient number of men with purity of heart, with strength, and with perseverance think and live out the thoughts of love and truth, of meekness and peaceableness.[1]

4. The supreme example is Jesus Christ. His Cross has been greater than all other thrones. His crown of thorns has been more enduring and more glorious than any earthly diadem. For nineteen hundred years the method of Christ has been known to men. It has not been adopted, but it has been known. In that period kingdoms have arisen, and have slowly crumbled away. Jesus Christ is still the greatest king in the world. Sacrifice is more permanent than tyranny and domination. The argument is with Christ, who flung Himself out to meet the challenge of the centuries, persuaded that love would win over hate, and that love was God.

¶ It seems so insignificant when one puts it alongside the world-shaking tread of conquerors. But something happened on that hill-top that

[1] Albert Schweitzer.

day that will shake to the dust all the kingdoms of the earth founded on blood and fear and hate. For love is stronger than hate, and goodness will outwear evil, and God will conquer man—by a Cross.[1]

Crucified or Consecrated?

Gal. v. 24.—'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.'
John xvii. 17.—'Sanctify them through thy truth.'

The Christian Church, with true emphasis, has regarded 'consecration' as expressing the highest ideal of the practical Christian life. To us as Christians the word stands for all that is best and dearest, and represents the supreme conception which Christ had for human life. As we use the term, we mean the life that is submitted to the will of God, the life in which Jesus is the centre and touches the circumference, the life in which the spirit of our Lord rules, guides, and influences both act and thought. By the consecrated life, we mean the daily life made sacred by being given to the service of God.

Can it be that by any chance we have set before us a wrong ideal? Does the New Testament not preach the crucified life? One could easily quote passages supporting this view. For instance, there is our text, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh.' But the point is, What is meant by the crucified life?

1. Unfortunately for us, terms were used in the Apostle's day in senses somewhat different from ours. Take this very word 'flesh.' As any one can see who studies the Apostle's language, that word was used, not to describe the whole body, the entire bundle of humanity which we possess, but only to describe the evil, the sin, the *badness* in the body. The word 'flesh' was a common philosophical term, current in certain schools and fashions of thought, to summarize all that was low and vile and against God. Men had to use some term, and in their unnatural division of human life into sections and compartments, the thinkers of that day used the term 'flesh' to describe what was against the spirit and against God. But the point is, we to-day use the term 'flesh' in a different—a broader and fuller—sense; and in forming our judgment, we must take clear note of the difference. When we speak about 'the flesh,' we mean all that is broadly, naturally, human—the whole physical side of man, the powers and gifts, the qualities and aptitudes, the natural tendencies and desires with which our loving God, in His wise goodness, has so richly endowed us. No Christian man who honours God's gifts would *dare* call these qualities and gifts evil in themselves, though we admit that they may be turned to evil. When the New Testament says 'crucify the flesh,' it does not mean 'crucify your rich humanity.' Would any man say that our human intellect in itself is evil, or our human imagination, our human will, our human body, or our human love? If so, then there was never *a human Christ*, or what Christ there was had no part with us.

2. Now to us the ideal of practical Christian life is not crucifixion but consecration—not maiming our rich inheritance of manhood and womanhood, but bringing it to its true perfection in Jesus, 'till we all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' All that we have—body, mind, heart, and imagination, as well as soul—is the gift of our Father; and it would be a farce—would it not? if we were given these endowments only to suppress them. These two ideals—the crucified life, and the consecrated life—have been at war throughout the whole history of the Church. The first, the crucifixion of the flesh, is seen in the ideal of the monk and the monastery, where men thought they could escape from the power of the world and the flesh by shutting themselves within cloistered walls. But we know that stone walls do not make any man's prison: his prison or his liberty lies in the state of his own mind and soul. Thus to us the monastic ideal has failed, simply because in the last resort it was un-Christian. Moreover, from the point of view of history, the ideal of crushing and suppressing the flesh as a direct means to spiritual power is at bottom a pagan and heathen ideal, representing the influence of Eastern religions (Indian, Persian, and Egyptian), on the early purity, and, we might say, the early *sanity* of the Christian Church.

¶ In a letter to his daughter in 1919 John Bailey writes: 'I am sure that "a fugitive and cloistered virtue" (Milton's phrase) is very inferior for most of us to a life in—but not too

[1] E. Stanley Jones.

much *of*—the world. The first cuts all the difficulties by running away from them, and is narrow and inhuman besides—tho' there are no doubt peculiar natures who become saints through it.'

Of course, it is only right to notice that consecration may imply crucifixion. There are things in our life—habits, passions, low ideals, false lordships—which must be broken and crushed, before there can be any real consecration. There are obstacles in our life that must clearly be swept away before the spiritual can have its chance. Christ Himself expressed this need in a startling phrase, 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out.' Anything in us that hinders the power of the Holy Spirit must be cut out. But this is not crucifying the flesh for its own sake, or as an ideal in itself, but crucifying it for the higher good of consecrating the whole humanity.

If a man would grow beautiful flowers, he must give no root-hold to weeds; but it is only weeds we uproot. So in life it is only as things hinder the higher life that there is any call for sacrifice. The supreme practical lesson we have to show men is this—not how much we can keep out of the world, but how much we can stand among our brother-men, taking our fair share in the world's business, tasting its true joy, its work, its worry, its sorrow, its dreams, and its love, and yet be able to live it all in true honour to man and true service to God. 'I have overcome the world,' cried Jesus—not by flight but by victory. That, too, is our ideal, to stand in the world and develop our full-sided human nature, and yet be master of both, because Christ is master of us!

3. Many of our young men and women to-day have a wrong view of what the Christian life is and demands. They regard it as a twisted, bloodless, anæmic thing, out of which the flowing sap and the rich juice have been squeezed, like a dried apple. Nor are they altogether to blame for this crude picture, since the Christian life has been largely defined in negatives. It became 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not,' an instance of the old Jewish law dominating the free spirit of Christ. Against this, we have to show the world that this is a false ideal. If there is any joy, any beauty, any peace, any thrill in life, it is ours. The Christian life is the fullest and richest life possible, and it is fullest and richest just in those things which most people deny—in joy and exaltation of soul. We are called 'to die daily,' but we die to *live*! We have to show the world that Christ does not starve or rob our manhood and womanhood, but enriches and ennobles, broadens and deepens it, both in body and soul.

¶ It was a habit of Coleridge to annotate the books he read with suggestions which occurred to him, and which illuminated the text by wonderful flashes of his genius. He would do this occasionally even with books borrowed from his friends. It was on this custom of his friend that Charles Lamb wrote his exhortation. 'Reader, lend thy books to S.T.C. for he will return them to thee with usury. He will enrich them with his annotations, thus tripling their value. I have had experience, and I counsel thee. Shut not thy heart, nor thy library against S.T.C.'[1]

There is no ideal for human life that is so rich and thrilling as Jesus Christ's. It is our humanity He wants, our humanity redeemed, a humanity that is rich and rounded and throbbing with a full-blooded life. Ours is the gospel of complete satisfaction, a complete fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church at times may have despised intellect, but Christ never did. Let Christ take those talents of ours, and He will baptise them in the glory of power. Let Christ take the financier's mind, the artist's vision, the poet's dream, the workman's hand, and He will consecrate them to magnificent ends. We even say, let Christ take our joy, our love of play, and He will so bless them till they ring like the laugh of the angels! Consecration is the life where every power and affection of man is beautified in the service of Christ.

The Ministry of Restoration

Gal. vi. 1.—'Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted' (R.V.).

The recurrence of inconsistency and even scandal in the life of the Christian community is a disheartening incident which always has to be reckoned with. Perhaps we blame the methods of conversion for such mishaps. We say, on the one hand, that crude revival converts, subjected to extreme momentary excitement and imperfectly instructed, are sure to

[1] T. H. Davies, *Spiritual Voices in Modern Literature*, 34.

fail after a while, sooner rather than later. If, on the other hand, we are in sympathy with special revival movements, we are apt to blame the quieter methods through which people are gathered into the Church, and assume that the nature has not been radically changed. Such pleas are irrelevant on whichever side they are used, for, as a matter of fact, the breakdowns come impartially and have no discernible connection with the methods through which men and women are brought into the Church.

And so a ministry of restoration is necessary. Of the accessions which came with the Pentecost at Jerusalem it is simply said, 'The Lord added to the church such as were being saved.' After their first admission into the fellowship doubtless many of them had to be picked up again and again out of the mire.

1. The word 'brethren,' which introduces the appeal, strikes the keynote of the argument, for brethren cannot be made or unmade at will. The bond between us and those with whom we have had communion in the presence of our Lord is not ended by what may prove only a temporary aberration from the best standards of Christian conduct, however grievous and exasperating the lapse may be. Whilst any residuum of the truth which saves remains in the heart and conscience of those overtaken in a fault we must recognize the obligation growing up out of our participation in the one bread and the one blood. Christian discipleship implies incorporation into the body of which Christ Jesus is the head, and he who falls into transgression has not lost the possibility of a revived adjustment with the sacred functions of that body. Bishop Lightfoot tells us that the Greek word for 'restore' means, in its primitive etymology, to set a bone or put back into its right place a dislocated joint. Now, whilst it may sometimes be a duty to the body to cut off a part in which actual mortification has set in, the readjustment where the condition is not obviously hopeless is a duty devolving upon those who have the necessary qualifications for the task.

¶ Harold Begbie has a remarkable book called *Broken Earthenware* in which he tells his wonderful experiences in East London in mending broken hearts and patching up broken lives. We see it also in Hugh Redmond's *God in the Slums*. We ought to see it in the work of every church in the world. The law of the jungle rules the wolves which turn and devour one of the pack that falls. But the law of Christ offers love and help, if a man or woman falls.[1]

2. While this task is of urgent obligation, it is also immense in its difficulties, and demands qualifications of skill and delicacy. Harshness, unjust reproach, recrimination, any superior assumption on the part of the man who assumes the office of restorer, will do harm rather than good. The Apostle singles out for this delicate and vital work those who are spiritual in temper and habit of mind, a qualification which lends itself to plain and simple tests. The spiritual man is one who, in his prevailing modes of thought and feeling, has become obedient and sensitive to the will of the Spirit of God. Spirituality arises not from a quality of temperament, but from a receptive habit of soul. The spiritual man is steeped in the fulness of the Divine life, and his dispositions are assimilated to those dispositions of gentle and tender helpfulness which have their home in God and are conveyed by His Spirit to others. The Spirit puts His own impress upon the man who is called to this Christlike work of readjustment and restoration. For to recover is in reality the work of the Divine Spirit Himself, and the Spirit seeks a spiritual man to be the instrument of it. No other qualification will avail for the great enterprise.

3. Meekness is allied to spirituality, and there can be no effectual ministry to those who are estranged where there is a temper of pride and spiritual superciliousness. The task must be begun, continued, and ended in the spirit of lowliness. The spiritual man is always humble, for he has learned his dependence on those inspirations which come down from God. Indeed, it is his own sense of nothingness which enables him to receive the subtle influences by which he is transformed and spiritualized. 'Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.'

Like the Lord Himself, we need to make ourselves one with those whom we would restore and uplift. The same temptation may befall us and find out in us the same frailties. Augustine says: 'There is no sin, which any man has done, but another may do the same.' How should we wish to be dealt with if in the same

[1] A. T. Robertson, *Passing on the Torch*, 73.

unhappy circumstances? We need to be altruistic in method as well as in motive. The Lord knew human nature well when He appointed a recovered backslider to be the strengthener of weak brethren and the special messenger to an apostate nation.

The highest spirituality is altruistic, for its genius constrains it to sympathy with those who fall and a tireless endeavour to lift them up. That Church is not the most Christlike which is careful of its reputation and has an immaculate record, but the Church which risks even its own name in stretching out hands to the weak, and within which the spiritual find time and faculties absorbed in bringing back those who have gone astray. The law of Christ, which is the only secret of success in this task, consists in taking upon ourselves the burdens of those who disappoint their early hopes. The genius of spirituality is practical. The function of the man who is possessed by the Divine Spirit and inspired with the Divine breath is to restore those who have been overtaken in offence and transgression.

¶ In one of the Continental museums is a fine marble statue which was found broken into hundreds of pieces. The fragments were carefully collected, and with infinite care and patience fitted together; at length a seemingly impossible task was accomplished, and the statue stands in all its original completeness and beauty, none the worse for the smash and the long burial in the dust.[1]

I saw a Saint.—How canst thou tell that he
  Thou sawest was a Saint?—
I saw one like to Christ so luminously
  By patient deeds of love, his mortal taint
Seemed made his groundwork for humility.

And when he marked me downcast utterly
  Where foul I sat and faint,
Then more than ever Christ-like kindled he;
  And welcomed me as I had been a saint,
Tenderly stooping low to comfort me.

Christ bade him, 'Do thou likewise.' Wherefore he
  Waxed zealous to acquaint
His soul with sin and sorrow, if so be
  He might retrieve some latent saint:
'Lo, I, with the child God hath given to me!'[2]

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Education of the Heart*, 244.
[2] Christina Rossetti.

What Kind of Burden Bearing?

Gal. vi. 2.—'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'

Paul begins this passage with the word 'brothers.' The old Swiss commentator Bengel remarks that a whole argument is summed up in that word. What he is about to urge is not meant for the raw public or the man in the street or any careless or casual reader but for those whose hearts have been touched by the love of Christ, whose imaginations have been kindled by the way He looked at men and lived and died for them as a brotherhood, one family in God. 'Brothers,' he says; for what he is coming to is not a matter to be determined by law or logic but one which really Christian men will treat as a family matter, in which affection, loyalty, reverence for a common Father will be the dominating considerations. Here is a subject that they must take into review among themselves not as men of the world but as brothers.

What, then, is this matter? It is the case that is liable to happen, of some one being caught in some flagrant wrongdoing, obviously guilty, overwhelmed by the scandal of it. We know from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians that Christians could show themselves hard and ruthless towards an offender. He does not say here that anything of this kind has actually occurred in Galatia, but he pleads that if it should ever occur they should, because they are Christian people, 'restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.' Then comes this beautiful and often quoted text, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'

1. One sees at once, from the connection, that one meaning frequently given to the text is, although it is quite a good meaning, not exactly what Paul intended. People take 'burdens' as a word for loads of toil or care or grief. They would find in it a sermon on these lines: be ready with sympathy, feel a friend's troubles as your own, help him if you can, take a bit of the load off his shoulder, be charitable, be neighbourly. All this is, of course, good Christian teaching and needs to be said. The words might mean that and are, indeed, often taken to mean that. And yet Paul obviously refers to something else

—the burden of punishment and disgrace and guilt and shame.

A wonderful illustration of Paul's real meaning is offered in a letter in one of the popular weekly papers. An article about prison life had been printed, showing the grim aspect of a convict prison and dwelling on the degrading effect it might have on its inmates; also describing experiments in prison reform which try to remove the dehumanizing effects of a soul-less system and to introduce elements of self-discipline and responsibility that might rehabilitate the prisoner and prepare him after release to be a decent citizen. (In some prisons great advances have been made with much success along such lines.) The week after that article had appeared the editor published a moving letter of thanks from a prisoner's wife, which ran: 'I feel very grateful for the kind words you found for the unfortunate inmates of prisons. My husband was sentenced in February 1942 for a term of four years for his first offence in connection with fraud of local monies. To me it sounded more like a death sentence. I have watched my husband grow from a happy-go-lucky sort of man to a bitter and hard specimen. He is now in Maidstone prison, which is much better than some, but, of course, not up to the standards you portray in your article. Now, thank God, I find a little more light showing in his eyes. It is no good condemning these men until we search our own souls. They, as you say, are suffering under the strain of war, and I know that my own husband, acting on a government job during the blitz, at £3 per week, had only got to the depths he did through strain and under-payment. But that is over now, and I am eagerly looking forward to his release, so that we can once again live our lives together. I think sometimes a little thought should be given to the wives and mothers of these men and women. We struggle on unaided to keep our homes going so that they can have a new lease of life.

'At last I have been able to get a "thank you" off my chest.'

Mark these points in that letter. There is no defence or palliation of the crime; it was a mean fraud, 'the depths.' There is no whitewash; he was 'a happy-go-lucky sort,' and he had grown 'bitter and hard.' Yet that woman's love had not faltered. 'My own husband,' she says, . . . 'I am eagerly looking forward to his release.' No doubt the future was shadowed and spoiled by his disgrace and punishment but 'we can once again live our lives together' . . . 'a new lease of life.'

Surely that woman is telling what Paul really means by 'bearing one another's burdens.' They are burdens of penalty and dishonour and shame. Supposing some one beside us should be detected, condemned, disgraced, what is our reaction to be? Are we to dissociate ourselves, stand aloof, cut him off, join in the clamour of execration? What is a brother's part? Surely not that! Nay. 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ'—of Him who bore our sins in His body on the tree.

2. One cannot think realistically on this subject without having in mind concrete cases on which it is painful to dwell. One far away memory of mine is of a village in which the wealthiest and most influential man was a singularly attractive character, respected and beloved, active in good works, hospitable to all in his beautiful home, an elder in his church. For years one of his sons alighted staggering from the late train nearly every night and reeled home in stupor to his father's house, the only place where he was still tolerated, and treated with kindness. Another memory is of a brilliant scientist who had made a fatal marriage in his impulsive youth to a girl whose conduct forced him to throw up his career, and ruined his family life, and drove him away from all his friends to earn a hard living in obscurity. All the time he kept her with him and I heard him say quite kindly of her when he was an old man, 'she has been a good wife to me now for many a year.'

There are all these pathetic cases where reckless or ignorant girls, often more sinned against than sinning, have found themselves, unmarried, yet with the burden of a child, and, helpless among strangers, have returned in disgrace to seek the shelter of the parental roof. A minister once told me that in his own poor parish he had known a number of such cases; and every time it was dissolute, drunken parents who had given their daughters no decent upbringing, who turned the suppliant girls with harsh words from the door; and it was the godly and straight-living, and Christian, those who had a right to say that their good training had been despised and their fair family name blotted, who were

willing to receive back the erring daughter into their home and together make the best of it.

One who was well known in English public life fifty years ago was brought to shame and imprisonment at the height of his career. When he passed into Court for trial, handcuffed between two policemen, an acquaintance of his waited in the corridor in order that, before the gaping throng there, he might acknowledge his friend by lifting his hat to him. The simple action made a sudden hush among the crowd. Long afterwards the guilty man wrote: 'I store that act in the treasure-house of my heart. The memory of that little, lovely, silent act of love has unsealed for me all the wells of pity, and brought me out of bitterness.'

It is one thing to share the burdens of others when we can do so standing firm on our own feet, stretching out a hand indeed but remaining ourselves unentangled, uncompromised, independent. It is another thing to accept a share in the shame and the consequences of another's sin and stand beside him in the mess he has made, and carry some of the loss of respect, and take part in the slow struggle of recovery, with all the handicaps involved. But it is along this harder way that men tread most nearly in the footsteps of Jesus 'who was made sin for us who knew no sin,' 'on whom was laid the iniquity of us all.'

R. W. Stewart.

The Law of Responsibility

Gal. vi. 2.—'Bear ye one another's burdens.'
Gal. vi. 5.—'Every man shall bear his own burden.'

These two quotations differ in point of form. One is an assertion of a general principle: 'Every man shall bear, that is, is appointed to bear, must bear, his own burden.' There you have the statement of a law of human nature. We might call it the law of individual responsibility.

The other is a law in a different sense: it is a command. The law of Christ, St Paul calls it. 'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.' We might call it the law, or rule, of Christian sympathy. The two verses are very near together. Was a contradiction intended between them? In the Greek a different word is used to express 'burden' in the two passages, so that the contrast is not quite so strong as in our version. Still, there is a kind of verbal contradiction. St Paul was fond of contrasting two truths in this paradoxical way. For instance, he writes on another occasion: 'Work out *your own* salvation with fear and trembling, for it is *God* that worketh in you.'

If, however, there is a verbal contradiction in the text, there is no real discrepancy. Individual responsibility is not necessarily inconsistent with Christian sympathy. If we look at each in turn from the point of view of the other, we see how closely they are related.

1. Take, first, the law of individual responsibility. We might render it perhaps: 'Every man shall carry his own pack.' We alone know what our individual burden is: 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness.' We each of us have our own inner life, which no one else can fully share. We may be surrounded by friends; we may be living with those whom we dearly love; our talk may be unrestrained; our feeling of intimate companionship very strong: yet there is a sense in which we are alone. Our deepest experiences, our inmost thoughts, cannot be fully communicated to others. None but ourselves and God can sound the mysterious depths of our personality. The human soul is a solitary thing.

I live a life apart, and you,
You, too, preserve a hidden life;
No loving hands can heal the strife
Which parts two souls, and keeps them two.

Yes, we are two. Keep back the sigh:
No heart can feel another's pain.
Alone we lose, alone we gain,
Alone we live, alone we die.

This isolation of soul from soul adds greatly to the pressure of life's burdens on us. In our everyday cares and troubles we may get advice, help, sympathy, though after all it is we who have to bear the strain, and no one else. But the deeper the trouble the harder it is to have it shared. Take the burden of *bereavement*, for instance. We all know how little, as a rule, other people can do for us under that. Most of our spiritual burdens in life are unseen, unsuspected, unshared by others. A man may

sometimes feel as acutely as the poet what Wordsworth calls

> the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world,

without being able to express this feeling even to his most intimate friend.

Then there is the burden of *religious doubt*, which sometimes, especially at the outset of manhood or womanhood, oppresses highly strung natures. We halt between two opinions about Christ: we seek for God, it may be, and cannot find Him. That is a stage through which people may have to pass, and in which they often shun taking others into their confidence.

Or think of the burden of *secret sin*. There are people who have the ever-present consciousness of some moral weakness, some meanness, some low propensity, which they dare not confess to others, and hate to dwell on themselves. They struggle and fall, until they are ready to cry out with the Apostle: 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

It is just at this point, when the tragedy of life seems darkest, when our burdens of various kinds seem almost intolerable, that a Divine law of compensation sometimes brings us relief. An alleviation of our burdens may come to us, not from any help received from other people, but from the help we are able to give to other people. Bearing some one else's burden lightens one's own. The claims that others have on us take us out of ourselves, so that we cease to brood over our own troubles. It is then we learn the profound truth of those simple words of our Lord's prayer. Just as we cannot get forgiveness from God for our trespasses unless we forgive our brother his trespasses, so God sends us no relief from our own burdens until we have tried to bear something for our neighbour. The very wish to be our brother's keeper brings us nearer to God and to Christ. God's purpose in the universe becomes clearer to us. We gain assurance that our sins are being forgiven, and our struggles against them helped. Our whole character is purified and freshened by our efforts to relieve others of a part of their load.

¶ Once when that great Indian saint Sundar Singh was crossing a range of mountains in Tibet in a heavy snowstorm he was joined by a stranger, a Tibetan. They were companions in misfortune. The cold was so intense that Sundar was beginning to despair of their reaching their destination, when he saw a man lying on the snow thirty feet below the path. He had slipped unconscious down the slope. 'Help me,' said Sundar to his companion, 'to carry this man to the village.' 'What!' said the other, 'we should be fools to try. We can hardly save ourselves.' Then he hurried on. Sundar clambered down the slope and in great peril and with tremendous effort hoisted the unconscious man on to his shoulders, struggled up to the path, and on. Some distance on he came up to his former fellow-traveller. He was sitting by the roadside frozen dead. But Sundar was more alive than before. He had been warmed by the extra exertion and by the friction of the living body he was carrying. Gradually the man he was befriending came to. Both reached the village alive and full of thankfulness.[1]

2. In the second place, it is a profound truth that the more we realize our own burdens, the deeper will be our insight into the burdens of others. To realize the needs of others, *as they themselves see them*, is the first and greatest step towards being able to help them. Sympathy requires tact and insight quite as much as it requires the desire to help. Our gifts of money, our offers of help, may be tainted by the spirit of patronage, of condescension. That will not be the case with the man who realizes that he has a burden of his own to bear, exactly like that which he asks to be allowed to share in another's life. It is a great thing not to shirk one's responsibility for one's own trouble. It is a still greater thing to use one's experience of that responsibility so as to help one's neighbour in *his* trouble.

¶ One of the most vivid passages in the *Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* tells of a period in his young ministry, when he was passing through a fiery crisis in his personal affairs, when a step either way involved misery. Torn by the conflict, he rushes from his study and sets out on a long walk. He overtaxes his strength and is forced to knock at a door for a brief rest. It is opened by a member of his own congregation—a plain, equable woman in whose presence he breaks down under the stress

[1] W. D. Ffrench, in *The Christian World Pulpit*, cviii. 4.

of his grief. To his utter amazement, this quiet woman proceeds to reveal a portion of her own former life, when she had passed through the poignancy of a similar experience; an ordeal that enabled her to give him priceless advice and consolation.[1]

3. 'So fulfil the law of Christ.' We remember the Golden Rule of Jesus of Nazareth: 'As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them likewise.' St Paul doubtless had this and similar sayings in his mind.

But is there not another possible interpretation of 'the law of Christ,' which has a bearing on the great act of the Atonement? To bear the burdens of others was a command which Jesus laid not merely on His followers, but also on Himself. There was a law of Christ which Christ alone fulfilled. Throughout His earthly life, and especially at the time of His death upon the Cross, He bore the burden of the whole race of mankind, He bore the sins of the whole world. In some mysterious way, without sin Himself, He took upon Him the sorrow, the humiliation, the degradation of human sinfulness.

Thus in the person of Christ the two aspects of the text become almost indistinguishable. The burdens of others became in a real and intimate sense His own. He understood them because He understood man. He accepted them because He loved man. He made them His very own because He wished to redeem man.

There we have an ideal which we can never reach. But we know that the more Christ-like we become the more we shall feel that other people's burdens are really and truly our own. Could we all, however imperfectly, come nearer to fulfilling the law of Christ, our social problems would solve themselves, and we should live in a world joyous with the ineffable joy of human brotherhood and of that Divine peace which passeth all understanding.

The Law of Recompense

Gal. vi. 7.—'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

1. A PRINCIPLE introduced by a solemn warning against its neglect—that is the first aspect of St Paul's words. That the harvest is determined by the sowing, absolutely so far as its nature is concerned, largely so far as its amount, is indeed a proposition which no sane man would dream of disputing. So far as we deal with the harvests of the fields and the orchards, there is perhaps little if any danger of this obvious truth being forgotten. Like begets like: if you want wheat you must plant wheat, if you plant oats you do not reap barley. That is the working rule of every farmer throughout the world.

But Paul had another kind of harvest in his mind when he wrote the text. He pictured men's actions as seeds cast into the soil, bound by the same law which holds harvest and sowing together in our fields—a moral law that fits into all that we know of the universe, as exactly as does the natural law of gravitation, and that we have just as good reason for acting upon its truth. There is nothing arbitrary about it. The fruits of our lives are the corresponding outcome of what we have been planting and sowing in the conduct of our lives; and in the nature of things they cannot be otherwise. Yet no sinner ever gathers his armful or barnful of thistles and darnel and wild mustard without grumbling at its not being wheat. For in the sphere of morals we are not so ready to remember that 'like begets like'; that a man's character is really the harvest of his habits; that his final destinies are really the harvest of his earthly life.

If we felt the reality of the spiritual laws which govern life, we would rise to heroic heights of obedience and endurance. Then we would be earning the praise our Lord gives to the pearl-trader, who realized that the one pearl was worth more than all he possessed, and who acted with businesslike promptness on that knowledge. And we would not be falling under that sorrowful rebuke, that the children of this world are wiser after their sort than the children of the Light.

2. The Apostle suggests that such forgetfulness is not difficult. 'Be not deceived,' he says, as if we were faced by a real danger that we should be deceived by a plausible denial of the truth. And indeed the danger of such deception is real and near. For moral issues are scarcely ever presented to us sharply and clearly. The harvest of character is slow in ripening and hidden in growth. Good and bad are strangely mingled. It is hard to say of any man that he

[1] J. J. Jeffrey.

is completely or decisively one or the other. Circumstances obscure issues: the plausible casuistry of the passions blinds men where they themselves are concerned. None of us can be trusted to sit in judgment on ourselves. Every experience leaves its impress on the self, but it is as difficult to realize the fact as it is to believe that every rain-drop tells on the hard surface of the granite boulder. In long reaches of time we can see plainly the effect of conduct on character, but from one day to another nothing seems to be affected, and we easily cheat ourselves into believing that nothing has happened. The charming petted child, indulged foolishly by its fond parents, and encouraged to think only of its own whims and wishes, seems just as charming on the morrow of its selfish excesses; but let the register of moral growth be taken over a longer period, and the true course of its advance will be apparent to the dullest. A wayward, sullen boy, and an obstinate, self-indulged youth, and a repulsively self-absorbed, self-seeking man, are not to be mistaken; and these all stand in true filial succession to the unheeded selfishness of childhood.

¶ 'What strikes me more and more,' wrote Dale of Birmingham, 'is the permanence of one's early life—the identity between youth and mature manhood. I do not mean that God has not lifted me out of many unsatisfactory things which surrounded and entangled me in youth, but that every habit—good and evil—of those early years seems to have permanently affected my whole life. The battle is largely lost or won before it seems to begin. The temptation in the wilderness determines, or largely determines, our fate.'

The deeds we do, the words we say,—
Into still air they seem to fleet,
We count them ever past;
But they shall last,
In the dread judgment they
And we shall meet![1]

3. 'God is not mocked'—by this startling exclamation St Paul reminds us that the stern truth upon which he is insisting connects itself with the very character of the Almighty. The universe, we have learned from the men of science, is everywhere subject to the 'reign of law.' Religious thinkers insist that this law-governed universe reflects as in a mirror the mind of its Creator. What we call 'the law of Nature' is, from the religious point of view, the will of God. Caprice and instability are the marks of finite and fallen creatures; we may not dare to suppose that these traits can mark the procedure of the Infinite and All-Holy Creator. In our blind conceit we may suppose that there is a way of escape for us from the stern regularity of His moral government, that we may sin and not be punished, that we may violate moral laws and escape moral deterioration, but herein we deceive ourselves. In the long run the law of God must be vindicated. However slow the process of growth may be, the harvest must arrive in due course, and it must disclose the nature of the sowing.

¶ Every age has its own new divine message for mankind, and the new truth which has inspired our day is that everything in the universe is bound together by one great unity and harmony. This oneness is a sure and irrefutable proof that all the phenomena of the so-called 'natural' and 'spiritual' worlds have one and the same Author—God: God who governs not by occasional, erratic, angry, interferences, but by absolutely unchanging laws—laws which are the expression of infinite wisdom and eternal love. The God whom we worship is not a God of gaps. The chain of life which proceeds out of the hand of God is whole and complete in every link. So it is not necessary, as at one time it seemed to be, to prove that at certain intervals God interposed, to introduce a different process of production from the normal one. As Sir Oliver Lodge says: 'The intervention of God is universal and constant.' 'Why should He step down and interfere with Himself?'

4. It is possible for us now, having traced the workings of this law, to stop. But to do so would be unchristian, almost inhuman. For to many the law may bring but little comfort, only a dull hopelessness, and a fearful looking forward to judgment. It may even have brought a feeling of indignation. Some may say, 'we see how this law works with automatic and inexorable exactitude; we see in its working inexorable justice, but what we fail to see is divine mercy. Where in all this does love come in? Where is that pity which we are taught to believe is ever in the heart of God, and that fatherly compassion for the sinner whom Christ

[1] Keble.

came to save? In the operations of this law the God who presides over the universe seems nothing more than that ruthless Fate which Huxley described watching over the players in a game of chess, in which every right move was rewarded, but every mistake mercilessly punished.'

But the outcome need not be Nemesis. God created man for Himself and ever seeks to bring man back to His loving and redeeming purpose. The Lord 'is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

No single metaphor can contain the whole gospel. And this figure which expresses the principle of the spiritual harvest has no room for the deepest and surest ground of our confidence in the end. The law of blind cause and effect is not the only law which rules in heaven. There is another and a mightier law of spiritual reversal and retrieval. By the miracle of God's redemption we sinners can reap what Christ Himself has sown. Whatsoever the Lord soweth, that shall He also reap. In the harvest, which is the end of the world, He shall see of His travail, and shall be satisfied. God is not mocked. By His acts of redeeming grace, He has involved Himself in the spiritual destiny of His creatures.

We are bound, of course, in some measure to reap the reward of past sin. Forgiveness does not annihilate the penalty and suffering of past sin—it transfigures it. Forgiveness, for example, does not give back a strong and healthy body to a man who before his conversion has lived a dissolute life. The material consequences are often left unchanged; but the direction of the life is changed and a man's spirit is freed for a new beginning—he is reconciled to God and feels once again in harmony with the universe.

¶ Take as an illustration Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. Here was a man who sinned. For years he hid the sin successfully away, yet through all those years he suffered the pains of hell. At last he repented, he confessed, he dragged his sin into the light, and threw himself upon the merciful love and pity of Christ. But the fruit of his sin did not instantly disappear. Nor did his suffering for that sin. In a sense it became greater. What happened to him, then, through his repentance? He became at once re-united to Christ; no longer did suffering for sin become a principle of death, through repentance it became a principle of life. From that moment the power of sin over him began to wither, he had found in a heart-felt repentance the peace that passeth understanding.

Everything depends under God on how a man reacts to his own history, how he takes it, what he does with it. It is in the future that its significance will not merely appear but actually be made real. Later experience can impart a new and beneficent meaning to what formerly seemed unrelieved disaster.

The practical and immediate thing to do is to seize the opportunity of this passing day. Opportunities fly past that do not come again, and every continuance in sin makes it more difficult to get back what we have lost. Behold, now is the accepted time. So may we in hope take the words of Scripture—'The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.'

Two Kinds of Sowing

Gal. vi. 8.—'He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

Having defined this law of recompense, the Apostle Paul goes on to show it operating in two great realms—that of the flesh and that of the Spirit; and that for the moral harvest we must not look merely to this life, but must take the other life into view. With this scope of survey we shall find no failure either way. To sow to the flesh is to be carnally minded, and to be carnally minded is death. Moral dissolution is the harvest of such sowing. If we sow to the Spirit, that is, if we obey the promptings of the Spirit and conform to His will, the reward will be eternal life.

1. Sir Oliver Lodge is reported to have said: 'The higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment.' But there is no conviction deeper in the mind of this generation than the conviction that the sinner has to pay. There are no words on its lips more frequently when the mood grows serious than the words inevitable, irreparable, irrevocable. The conviction indeed is exaggerated, and takes the form of paganism when men

believe in Nemesis and refuse to believe in God. Yet it is true in an awful and profound sense, though blessed be God it is not utterly true. When men say that the punishment of sin cannot be remitted, that justice ever inflicts the inevitable penalty and exacts a complete satisfaction, they are ignorant of the wonders of grace. But what desolations have been wrought on the earth by sin!

Dr Dale argued long ago with considerable force that so far as this life is concerned it may be doubted whether the exact punishment and the exact reward is allotted. He pointed out that here men can discern only the rudiments of a moral order. Neither external evils nor interior shame and anguish have invariably followed grave crimes, while the lives of saints and martyrs have seemed a perpetual struggle with every form of suffering. The rewards and punishments of this life are not adequate sanctions of the eternal law of righteousness. It may be so, but the punishment is real enough and stern enough. There is a terrible meaning in the phrase 'reap corruption.' It suggests a world of living and moving abominations.

'Flesh' is the visible part of us, the part that brings us into contact with the material world, that is easily affected by pleasure and pain, that is selfish and sensual and sinful, the life which lies outside of God, the life which belongs to an order of things which is decaying and corrupt. Hell is but the ripened harvest of such a life.

¶ 'The soul in its highest sense,' says Henry Drummond, 'is a vast capacity for God . . . but without God, it shrinks and shrivels until every vestige of the Divine is gone, and God's image is left without God's spirit. One cannot call what is left a soul; it is a shrunken, useless organ, a capacity sentenced to death by disuse, which droops as a withered hand by the side, and cumbers nature like a rotten branch.'

Some sins are more heinous, the Shorter Catechism says, in the sight of God than others, that is to say they are more corrupting, just as some poisons are more swift in their effect than others, and more actively death-giving, but all sins, as all poisons, have death in their cup. But many of the sins which we commit are committed unconsciously, it may be said, committed through ignorance, or lack of moral insight, and the penalty thus involved seems incredibly unjust. These, however, are not the corrupting sins, for they are not committed with the acquiescence of the will. The sins which corrupt, which drag the nature down in ruin, are the open-eyed, wilful, defiant sins which we commit against the light.

Sow, then, to the flesh, give rein to passion, pamper our appetites, and know this—that such sins do not lie down quiescent; they ripen, they bear a terrible harvest. Byron, who knew it well, has described it in these words:

> My days are in the yellow leaf,
> My soul is sere with sullen grief,
> It is as if the dead could feel
> The icy worm around them steal,
> And shudder as the reptiles creep
> To revel o'er their rotting sleep,
> Without the power to scare away
> The cold consumers of their clay.

2. Over against this sowing to the flesh Paul sets the ideal of sowing to the Spirit.

'Spirit' is the invisible part of us; that which is akin to God; that which may be directly controlled by the Divine Spirit; that which, when so controlled, shimmers through the veil of the flesh as the Shechinah shimmered through the veil of the Temple; that which so dominates the body as to render it a living sacrifice, its members instruments of righteousness unto God, organs of Him who is Head of the Body, so that He thinks through the brain, loves through the heart, looks through the eyes, becomes articulate on the lips, and operates through hands and feet.

So 'sowing to the Spirit' means living with a view to developing our highest faculties. We have within us a heavenly spark, a spark of the Divine, something from above, something that binds us to beauty and truth and goodness; and the question is whether we are going to make the development of that in ourselves, and in others, the main purpose of our lives; and we can scarcely do that without God.

It is when we connect our ideas of goodness, of truth, and of beauty with the Spirit of God that then we shall be sure that we are making no mistake and that we really are sowing to the Spirit. The aim of a life that is God-initiated, God-controlled, God-directed, and God-filled: that is, to 'sow to the Spirit.'

3. The harvest of sowing to the Spirit is 'life everlasting.' Life is the greatest promise of the

New Testament. 'He that believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' Goodness cannot die.

The good is by its nature everlasting, and evil is by its nature not everlasting. Evil dies out, good continues to live. That is a matter of experience. It is the history of the world. The evil thing lasts a long time, and grows more and more evil; but the more evil it grows, the nearer is it to perishing. The evil in a man slays itself. Hatred, revenge, impurity die of their own poison. But the good thing in him grows more good; and the more good it grows, the more of life it has, the more numerous are its children. When a spiritual life of love and righteousness begins in a man, it expels the evil day by day; and it doubles and trebles itself, becoming more and more alive. When evil gets into a man it also increases, but when it has reached a certain point it can go no farther; it has no more that it can do. It brings on such great suffering at last, or such incapability of action, or such madness of mind, that it dies, like the scorpion, of its own venom. It has destroyed its own means of life.

Wherever then there is a sowing to the Spirit in the fields of time, there is assured the reaping of a harvest in the fields of eternity. But while the harvest of everlasting life has thus a special reference to immortality, we must not limit it to the hereafter. The life Christ bestows on the man who is sowing the good seed, is enjoyed even here in that peace 'passing all understanding' which is the fruit of a good conscience and a heart devoted to high ideals.

We are all tempted to despise the small crosses, the small openings for kindness and self-sacrifice the day brings us, and the petty duties and burdens which fill up our humdrum existence. When we meet these faithfully and nobly, we have our reward on a grander scale than we could have expected. Burdens grow to wings, crosses to crowns, faithful endurance to triumph; and from each discharge of duty we acquire the power to meet the next with efficiency. 'We see dimly in the present what is small and what is great,' as Lowell says. We are blinded by the illusions of life, and take the great for the small, because it is not the big. Our small victories in the face of temptation are won over obstacles and spiritual enemies of the highest rank, and are won to the shaping of our characters, the strengthening of our wills, the purification of our vision, and the increase of our faith and joy. Professor William James suggests that to do each day of life some one thing we know we ought to do, but do not want to do, would have the result of making us wiser and braver men, and more fit for great things if these fell to our share.

Time is the sowing place for the harvest of eternity. How earnest then should be our use of it, knowing that it holds within it issues so vast! A great artist was once asked why he spent so much time over mere infinitesimal details in his pictures. 'Because,' he replied, 'I paint for eternity.' If that be a fit motive for securing an earthly immortality, how much more when we work for a crown 'incorruptible and undefiled!' Let us put all the labour we can into our sowing here, assured that if there may sometimes seem but little immediate return, the promise is—'he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

Fill up each hour with what will last.
Use well the moments as they go.
The life above when this is past
Is the ripe fruit of this below.
Sow truth if thou the truth wouldst reap.
Who sows the false shall reap the vain.
Sow love and taste its fruitage pure,
Sow peace and reap its harvest bright,
Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor
And find a harvest home of light.

The Perils of Weariness

Gal. vi. 9.—'And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'

St Paul found the members of the Church in Galatia very disappointing. As a result of his preaching they had become ardent believers, enthusiastic followers of Jesus Christ. But no sooner had Paul left them to themselves, than they began to fall back into Judaism and paganism. They lacked endurance. They had no power of perseverance. They resembled the seed in the parable, growing up rapidly in the stony ground, and producing a luxuriant growth, long before the rest of the field had sent up a single blade, but speedily withering away for lack of root.

Paul could hardly understand this temperament. It was so different from his own. The

enthusiasm awakened in him on the Damascus road increased rather than lessened as he neared the end of his pilgrimage. But the grace of God had given him a deeper insight into the character of men, and a gentler way of dealing with natures very different from his own. And so, instead of upbraiding the Galatians for their short-lived devotion, he used the language of quiet exhortation, including himself in the advice, 'Let us not be weary in well-doing.'

1. What is well-doing? The term here is a very inclusive one. The context applies it for us to the realms alike of thought, of being, and of action.

(1) *All thought is of the nature of seed.* We should see, therefore, that our thoughts are good and spiritual. How largely is a man's life affected by the thoughts in which he indulges concerning himself! If, for example, he 'thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing' his thoughts give rise to a crop of idle and repulsive habits which ruin his personality and reduce him to a nonentity. But if a man thinks humbly about himself, if he meditates very much on what God means him to be, he will, all unconsciously to himself, become noble, spiritual, in the Christlike virtues which will adorn his character. His very thinking is thus a process of sowing.

The same thing is true if we take a wider range. With all Nature beneath, around, and above us; with the endless problems of national social, and spiritual life pressing ever upon us, we are bound to think. To drift into a state of apathy or mental idleness will mean that, while we sleep, the enemy will sow tares: unwholesome, pernicious ideas.

We ourselves become stronger, and more and more capable, by every use we make of our intellect. And, whether we realize it or not, we are scattering seeds, not only into the soil of our own personality, but into the ground of contemporary life and thought.

(2) *All being is seed-sowing.* These chapters are full of this great truth. We are either walking after the flesh or by the Spirit. If it be in or after the flesh, we are becoming 'vainglorious,' provocative, envious day by day. But if we 'walk by the Spirit' we 'shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.' If we have our being in God, then all our tempers, our conversation, our habits, will become increasingly Christlike. Put down a man who abides in Christ in the midst of any society, and not only will he himself become better and worthier by the fructifying nature of his own derived goodness, but his life will be as seed in the hearts of men.

(3) And, of course, *every good deed is seed-sowing.* The man who thinks good thoughts, and in himself lives the good life, must be the doer of good deeds. Over and above the fact that his thoughts and his life cannot be in vain, he is always seeking to 'work that which is good' to his fellows, and he may sustain himself with the reflection that every good action is far better than ever it seems to him to be.

It does not end in, and with, itself. It is treasured up in the affection and memory of the grateful recipient, some day to be repeated or handed on to another; and thus, gathering to itself more and more of the spirit of kindness and love, it grows out of all recognition, and becomes a mighty factor in the uplift of the world.

2. 'Be not weary in well-doing' is also *a Divine warning.* The weary mood is never far away from us, it must be watched, or it will overtake us. 'Neither the first nor the last has been the difficult step with me,' says Mark Rutherford, 'but rather what lies between. The first is usually helped by the excitement and the promise of new beginnings, the last by the prospect of triumph. But the intermediate path is unassisted by enthusiasm, and it is here we are likely to faint.' There is a courage of decision, a higher courage of continuance. The Prophet Hosea has well described it: 'Your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew,' absorbed by the first hour of sunshine. This is such a constant and menacing danger that we find that endurance is one of the watchwords of the New Testament.

The Greek word for 'weary' is a compound of *kakon*, which means *badness*; while the Greek word for 'well-doing' is a compound of *kalon*, which means beauty or goodness. And the meaning of the advice of the Apostle, therefore, is—Let not your goodness become badness—your beauty, deformity.

So that the words 'Let us not be weary in well-doing' have this very searching meaning: 'Let us not be weary in *beautiful* doing!' Because the soil is reluctant and ungracious don't let our ministry be primitive and rude.

Let our 'doing' be 'beautiful,' even when we are dealing with unlovely people. That is hard and difficult work! It is easy to set beautiful things before beautiful people; but to set beautiful things before unlovely people, and to go on doing it when the beauty seems thrown away, is a demand that is apt to strain and tire the spirit. But it is altogether right and altogether prudent. There is nothing more unwise than to let our culture become slovenly because the bit of land we have to till is scraggy and poor. We can make no greater mistake than to become rough and rude just because our audience is rough and rude. It is always a mistake for a speaker to shout because his audience is noisy. No, our doing must be beautiful, always and everywhere 'beautiful,' and there comes in the strain! If the field is hard, let the work be beautiful!

3. *The causes of weariness.* Why is it that we grow weary in well-doing? There are various explanations.

(1) We may put lack of success first. We start work eagerly, we feel a flush of pleasure, a thrill of buoyancy and confidence, at first everything seems easy, and we are so sure of success. Then difficulties emerge, the hardness of it is gradually driven home to us, it grows monotonous, the results are so slight, perhaps we can see no results at all.

It is here that we too often err. 'In due season,' says the Apostle. Because we do not meet with immediate success, or because success is long delayed, we lose heart and are prone to play the coward. We forget that God's time is not always our time. We should remember that with Him a thousand years are as one day, that God's delays are not always denials. It ought to be enough for us to know that there is a 'due season,' come when it may, and that come it will; that, just as certainly as harvest follows seed time in the sphere of Nature, so will it be in the sphere of grace, infallibly, inevitably, unfailingly so.

¶ 'If the thing would only move,' cried James Gilmour, out in Mongolia. One is not surprised when he ends one of his letters: 'Yours, dried up and feeling dumb, James Gilmour.' 'The most constant force,' says his biographer and friend, Richard Lovett, 'acting in the direction of mental depression, was what appeared to him like the want of immediate success.' 'I see exceeding small fruit of my ministry, and one would be glad to know of one soul to be my crown and rejoicing in the day of Christ,' writes Samuel Rutherford to Lady Kenmure. If the great mass of inertia would only move, give way but half an inch; but it doesn't.

(2) Then there is ingratitude, lack of appreciation. A Sunday school teacher begins full of hope, in joyous exaltation of spirit. By personal affection he will win their hearts, by personal labour ground them in eternal verities. He prepares his lessons carefully and prayerfully, but those for whom he toils seem so indifferent, the unruly boys won't listen to anything. And nobody else praises, no one says 'Well done.' No one has imagination or understanding of the value, the difficulty, the drudgery of the task. Our sympathy has gone forth in words and acts of helpfulness, but those we sought to benefit have proved so unworthy, or so ungrateful, that our souls are chilled and depressed. Having done our utmost no one cares, so we are disheartened, tired, the whole business seems so useless. We are disposed to give up altogether.

¶ In the superb and appalling play of *King Lear*, when the driving tempest smote the desolate and forlorn old man as it swept across the open heath, the old man felt the beating wind and rain to be altogether less pitiless than the invisible storm which shook his very soul.

> Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
> Thou art not so unkind
> As man's ingratitude.

And that is the wind that blows upon every devoted worker of the Lord, and sometimes leaves him limp and weary.

(3) A further cause of weariness is cavilling criticism. People who do little or nothing themselves usually feel justified in offering criticisms—often very paltry criticisms—upon the work of others. So we grow weary in well-doing, and the next thing to being weary, is to give up altogether. Growing tired of God's work, we desert Him. There is need for men of ability in the Christian Church, but there is a greater need of men of endurance.

¶ During the progress of the Civil War in America a personal friend of President Lincoln once said to him: 'Do you really expect to end the war during your administration?' 'Can't say, can't say,' replied Lincoln. 'But what

do you mean to do?' 'To peg away, to keep pegging away.'

I am glad to think
I am not bound to make the world go right;
But only to discover and to do,
With cheerful heart, the work that God appoints.

4. *The cure and the promise.* We have a Divine Partner. Our work is like farming, we are in league with most mighty and mysterious forces. In all our spiritual farming the same real Presence fills the dim background, the same great Ally is on the field, and all our methods and implements of work are but so many reverent leagues and covenants by which the alliance can be made efficient. 'Work out your own salvation . . . it is God that worketh in you.' 'Paul planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.'

Bishop Lightfoot points out that the form of these words implies that faintness which sometimes overtakes the labourer, especially in the East, where a high and scorching sun takes away all energy and paralyses the strongest physique. And such, at times, are the outward circumstances of life that even a giant's strength is not proof against them. But we are not left alone to face the tropical sun and the exhausting heat. In the most difficult and trying ordeal of life and work we may have His help and succour who gives strength and glory, and whose Presence to us will be 'as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'

We have a most heartening promise. In due season we shall reap if we faint not. 'We shall reap.' Garrison's last recorded public utterance in England closed in these words: 'I began my advocacy of the anti-slavery cause in the Northern States of America in the midst of brickbats and rotten eggs, and ended it on the soil of South Carolina, almost literally buried beneath the wreaths of flowers which were heaped upon me by the liberated bondmen.' From brickbats to flower-wreaths! That has been the history not only of slave emancipation, but of all noble reforming ministry from our Lord's day even until now. 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.'

Doing Good

Gal. vi. 10.—'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.'

'Do good' is the last advice of the Apostle in this letter. The Galatians had been tempted to go off on a side issue and to forget the claims, the freedom, and the joy of spiritual religion. After careful argument St Paul brings them to the point that the Spirit of God is in the hearts of all Christians, and that He is to bring forth fruit in their daily life. Then he gives some practical hints as to facing bravely the difficulties of life, as to lightening the burdens of others and not shrinking from bearing our own, as to perseverance in well-doing with perfect confidence that good results will some day ensue. And then comes the conclusion of the whole matter—'Do good.' A few verses follow before the Epistle closes, but they are just a personal postscript on the part of the writer. Having dictated all he had to say, he adds a few lines in his own hand. But the last note of his official message to the Galatians is: 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.'

1. These are the words of one who sees quite clearly that God's work in this world is of such a kind that it will take a long time. He sees that the victory which Christ has planned is not, as it were, merely the taking of a position by a kind of assault-at-arms; rather is it a final conquest of the world which is to be achieved by the besieging pressure of goodness, here, and there, and everywhere. He is not limiting God's freedom or presuming to say how He may or may not operate in human affairs. He is only saying in effect that we ought to put ourselves in the line, not of God's extraordinary working, but of His ordinary working; that God is not lightning, which flashes, and overturns, and attains its end by the way of disaster; that God rather is Light, which, contending silently against the natural darkness of things, dawns and increases till the perfect day.

It may still be that God is at this moment preparing some world-shaking event which will make a new opening for Himself in the life of man; but that is His business. Our business is

so to live, that God, goodness, holiness, kindness, love, pity, mercy, the things of the Spirit, will become for men of the world not curious matters about which to debate, but a kingdom of realities as firm, as stable, as near to them, as convincing, as the ground beneath their feet.

2. And now consider these words from a very definite point of view: 'As we have opportunity, let us do good.'

A day comes in the life of every one of us, sometimes bringing great distress of mind, when we sit down in front of ourselves and will not let ourselves go until we have faced this question, 'For what reason am I in this world?' Or, if we do not put the question so abruptly, when we say to ourselves, 'Now that we are here in this world, what are we going to make of ourselves, what are we going to do with ourselves, what kind of meaning are we going to put upon our life such as shall save us at the end of our life from the awful retrospect that we have lived for nothing, that we have simply passed the time, that we have not paid our way?'

We know, not with our minds only but with our whole being, that we have a duty to the world. We feel that we owe something to this world of human beings from whom, under God, we have received everything—homes, friends, language, laws, liberty; likewise those achievements of the human soul—music, art, and the world of ideas by which we manifest our supremacy over the creatures. We feel that, for whatever else we came into the world, now that we are here, the thing which will judge us in the end of the days, the thing which will justify our existence or condemn us, is just the answer which we shall be able to give when the Author of our being, who entrusted us with life, shall ask us one by one: 'What did you do when you were in the world of men to defray the cost to the world of supporting you? What did *you* do to help the world? What did you do to make life better, to make it bear less heavily and cruelly upon some poor souls?'

'I made life sweet,' my Lord will say
When we meet at the end of the King's Highway,
'I smoothed the path where the thorns annoy,
I mended the children's broken toy,
I gave the mother back her boy.
And what did you?' my Lord will say,
'As you travelled along the King's Highway?'

3. St Paul, who was old enough to have observed how certain principles of behaviour worked and how they bore the test of time, gives it as his mature and considered opinion that the best and surest maxim which a good man could take with him into life is just this: 'As ye have opportunity, do good to all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.'

Now it requires a good deal of faith and patience to go on each day fully assured that if we each day *do good*, adopt, that is to say, a good and Christian attitude to all men, we shall be doing the very best service not only to our immediate circle but to the whole cause of God in the world. And yet that is just what we are to believe. The New Testament has little to say as to how evil came into the world. It has a great deal to say as to how evil is to be put out of the world. And what it has to say is, that the only way by which evil can be put out of the world is by God being brought into it. And God is brought into this world not so much in miraculous and catastrophic ways, as by the lovingkindness of human hearts, by the grateful and happy response of human souls here, there, and everywhere to Jesus Christ.

Therefore to the question which troubles us as to how most worthily we can dispose of our life, which hastens so swiftly to its close, let us see that our answer includes the spirit of these simple words: 'Let us do good as we have opportunity.'

4. We often agitate ourselves as to how things seem to be going in the world—in our own land, in other lands, everywhere. We may wish at times even that God, by a notable stroke of His hand, would banish a thousand evils from the face of the earth, that He might, as Isaiah cried, come out of His hiding-place and do something. But we must beware of ourselves at such angry moments. We must at least be sure that we ourselves are doing something. For is it not the fact that nearly all the sorrow of this world arises from our hardness of heart towards one another, from our unkindness, from our selfishness, from our greed, from our undue love of our own comfort? There is no problem of evil; there is only the problem of the human heart. If every one were to become actively kind instead of unkind or unthinking;

if every one were to become generous instead of mean or selfish; gracious instead of rude; believing rather than suspicious; thinking of our duties rather than of our rights—is it too much to say that the face of the world would be changed and we should scarcely know ourselves? Well, it may be too much to expect the whole world to become changed in a day. But it is not too much to expect all these things of people like ourselves who belong to the Church of Christ.

¶ Comparatively soon I came to consider kindness as the paramount virtue. It can work miracles and move mountains. Of all the powers that men and women possess, this of being kind is the greatest. And deep in ourselves we seem to know that in being kind we follow a natural instinct. We seem to know that destiny means us to be kind. It is what I have tried to put firmly into my books. If I had to say it with absolute plainness I could but repeat it in increased strength, and say thus: 'Kindness. Be kind to people. And then, when you have been as kind as you possibly can, be a little kinder still.'[1]

Life is not so difficult as we sometimes try to make out. It is not so complicated. A good man always sees his way. We are not here to do everything. We are where we are, and we have our duties accordingly. 'As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' It is by each of us doing the kind and loving thing which is always at our hand that the boundaries of God's Kingdom are pushed forward. It is by each of us doing the kind and loving thing which is always at hand that the way is kept clear and open for those more notable outpourings of His grace which God is pleased from time to time to send down upon nations and upon individual souls.

The Symbol of Christianity

Gal. vi. 14.—'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

CHRISTIANITY is the religion of the Cross. Its subject-matter is called the Cross. Its Author and Lord is the incarnate, risen, and exalted Son of God who died upon the Cross. Its aim, salvation, is accomplished through the Cross. The Cross is the outstanding symbol of Christianity.

What is the meaning of this? Why is this place given within Christianity to the Cross? It is for two reasons. The one is what is vividly suggested by the Cross itself: the other is the victim in whom Christianity is chiefly interested who suffered upon the Cross. The Cross stands for two things. It stands for the proper fate of the worst of evil-doers. It stands also for the common fate of devoted saviours of their kind. No wonder the Cross should find a prominent place in a religion whose aim is the salvation of sinful men.

But it is Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified, who gives supreme significance to the Cross. But for Him it would never have received attention; everything turns on Him. It was a bold, God-inspired venture of faith when Peter, from mere familiar intercourse with the man Jesus, declared Him the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Resurrection was God's own attestation that men had read aright the signs they saw in Jesus. But what about the enigma of His death, His death on the Cross? When faith reflected on who He was, and received God's testimony to His worth, it saw immediately that if once the meaning of that death were realized, nothing else could mean so much for men as that. And with the light of its meaning breaking in ever greater brilliance around them Paul in an ecstasy burst forth in the words, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross.' It was its double significance of shame and salvation, elements so signally blended in the experience of the Lord, that made the Cross at once draw and repel. As the poet puts it:

> This, that killed Thee, kissed Thee, Lord!
> Touched Thee, and we touch it: dear,
> Dark it is; adored, abhorred:
> Vilest, yet most sainted here.
> Red of heat, O white of heat,
> In it hell and heaven meet.[2]

1. The Cross of Christ, first of all, witnesses to the completeness of the Divine understanding of, and the intensity of the Divine sympathy with, human suffering and sorrow.

In one of his sonnets in the *Vita Nuova*, Dante

[1] W. B. Maxwell.

[2] George Meredith, *The Song of Theodolinda*.

distils the essence of sympathy into these two lines. Speaking of one who offered him comfort in his great grief over the death of Beatrice, he says,

Our life revives, since one doth now console
Who sorrows with us, *healing grief with grief.*

That goes to the heart of things. The sympathy that we feel to be most real is that which has behind it a kindred experience. Remember, then, who suffered upon the Cross. It was God incarnate, God in human flesh. Remember the sufferings and the shame of the Passion week which culminated in the Cross. They meant the physical pains of scourging and nailing to the tree; the nervous strain of sleepless hours, amid the anxiety of suspicion and treachery; the shock of defection by trusted friends; the shame of public insult and exposure; the agony of soul and desolation of spirit endured in Gethsemane and voiced in the cry from the Cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Remember that the Father gave up the Son to suffer all this for us. Are these sufferings not the guarantee to us that God knows by experience what human suffering is, knows what bereavement is, and can feel for the creatures He has made?

¶ Thomas Carlyle moralizes on the fate of Marie Antoinette. Where must she look for consolation when, on the way to the guillotine, every heart was steeled against her? And this is what he says. 'Think not of these; think of Him whom thou worshippest, the Crucified—who also treading the wine-press *alone*, fronted sorrow still deeper; and triumphed over it, and made it holy; and built of it a "Sanctuary of Sorrow," for thee and all the wretched!'

2. Christianity, for a second thing, bears unswerving testimony to God's absolute antagonism to sin. And the Cross is the symbol of that.

Men knew what they meant by condemning a man to the Cross. It was the brand of their utter execration on what they believed to be his way of life. And however often justice might miscarry, the innocent suffer, or the victim be a martyr for a holy cause which misguided men failed to recognize, yet the Cross was a human testimony against sin, expressed what man in his inmost conscience knew every sin deserved. God endorsed that judgment. It was a God-given instinct that looked with unrelenting eyes on wickedness.

There is a great fact called human solidarity. We are members of one body, and if one member goes wrong all the others suffer with it, cannot escape; personal worth is no protection. And Christ had become a member of this sin-smitten race. He might, He did, avoid all personal participation in its evil ways. But if He went into the waters of baptism, it was because He acknowledged the sin of the race to which He belonged, sin in which therefore He was involved, and He consecrated Himself to save them. And when He suffered on the Cross, submitted to death and all that led up to death there it was just because on man's behalf He acquiesced in this way in God's judgment upon sin.

¶ In his *Life of General Gordon*, Sir William Butler describes his hero's feelings during the last siege of Khartoum. 'That this heroic soul had now come to look upon his life as a sacrifice to be given in atonement for the sins of his fellow-countrymen in Egypt is beyond dispute. "I feel that all these wrongs can only be washed out in blood," he wrote towards the end of 1883. And a few months later he uses these words: "May our Lord not visit us as a nation for our sins, but may His wrath fall on me, hid in Christ. This is my frequent prayer, and may He spare these people, and bring them to peace."'

3. But if this were all we had to say, the Cross would only be a horror, and God a darker enigma. Simply to share men's suffering and to share men's doom, if it cannot be redemptive, is only tragic. But the human heart has always had the conviction that in certain hands such sharing of suffering and doom can be redemptive. It may be so in the case of the innocent. It may be so for all for whom the innocent stands, for all with whom he is in touch. If one could appear in touch with all humanity, animated by a love wide enough, he could stand for them all. But this is to ask for the coming of God, and a Divine sacrifice. Yet men imagined that even that might be. To say nothing of the whole testimony of the Old Testament, Æschylus thought there was hope for Prometheus, if

Some God should come to bear his woes
And pass to Hades' sunless realm,
And the dark cloudy depths of Tartarus.

Sophocles knew the power of love to save. Œdipus in his misery, seeking for deliverance from the fate that his unconscious sin had brought upon him, cries,

> One soul working in the strength of love
> Is mightier than ten thousand to atone.

Atonement, sacrifice, with all that it involved of substitution and propitiation, all that it expressed of submission, restitution, plea for pardon, was the method to which mankind instinctively betook itself to get rid of the burden on the conscience which we call the sense of guilt.

Now the Cross is the symbol of all that. It says that it was a true instinct in the human heart which said atonement was needed before we could be forgiven. It was a true instinct which said that one must die for the many, the innocent for the guilty, if they were to be saved, and which realized that there was something in the very constitution of humanity—no mere legal fiction—that made this possible. But it also supplies the answer to the challenge and the fear. To the fear that there was no one equal to the task, it offers the Son of God. To the challenge 'Why was atonement necessary?' the question 'Is not pardon free?' it offers the suffering Son of God.

Lily Douglas, in *Christus Futurus*, says: 'Reason cries, "If God were good, He could not look upon the sin and misery of man and live; His heart would break." The Church points to the Crucifixion and says, "God's heart did break." Reason cries, "Born and reared in sin and pain as we are, how can we keep from sin? It is the Creator who is responsible; it is God who deserves to be punished." The Church kneels by the Cross and whispers, "God takes the responsibility; and bears the punishment." Reason cries, "Who is God? What is God? The name stands for the unknown. It is blasphemy to say we know Him." The Church kisses the feet of the dying Christ, and says, "We must worship the majesty we see."' The only criticism on that beautiful utterance is, that it is not reason that speaks as reason is represented here, but unreason and cavil and pride and sin at bay. Reason is humble and learns at the Cross the solution of many a mystery, but also that there are mysteries like the overcoming of sin which the heart gratefully welcomes and accepts, but which human reason cannot fully fathom or understand. It learns the mystery of the Cross.

4. There is still another side of Christianity of which the Cross is the symbol. It is the symbol of the life which the Christian is to live.

Before ever His own cross was set up Christ said, 'Whosoever will be My disciple, must take up his cross and follow Me.' When He said this, it was simply a very vivid figure that could not fail in its message to men who knew too well the methods of a Roman execution. It meant to say that even if following Christ involved a way through life whose only parallel for crushing burden and scorn was to be found in that of a man on his way to execution with his cross on his back, a true disciple must be prepared for it. If loyalty to Christ meant the uncomplaining acceptance of imposition, misrepresentation, ingratitude, and cruelty, the true Christian must not shrink. But how enormously intensified is the force of the words when Jesus has to the very letter borne the Cross along the 'Dolorous Way,' and died on the Cross for men! In the light of that we understand what Amiel says: 'The Cross is the guarantee of the gospel, therefore it has been its standard.'

¶ The old tale runs that as St Francis was walking near the Church of San Damiano, the word came unto him in the Spirit that he should enter in and pray. Having entered in he began to pray fervently before a certain image of the Crucified One. He devoted himself to God's service, and later we have him repeating the words of the text: 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'

'O my Lord Jesus Christ,' he prayed, 'grant me two graces before I die: the first, that in my life-time I may feel in my soul and in my body, so far as may be, the pain that Thou, sweet Lord, didst bear in the hour of Thy most bitter passion; the second is, that I may feel in my heart, as far as may be, that exceeding love wherewith Thou, O Son of God, wast kindled to willingly endure such agony for us sinners.'

The more it is pondered, the more the power of Christianity is found to lie in the Cross. The incarnate Christ, the risen and exalted Christ, and all His mysterious presence among us and

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experiences in our midst, become intelligible when we find Him acting for us and upon us by His death on the Cross, acting in us and through us by awakening in us the very spirit that led Him to the Cross. Of course the Cross does not say all. It is but a symbol, and no symbol can. But 'the very power of a symbol lies in the sublime inadequacy and yet practical effectiveness of its suggestion.' And this symbol is associated so intimately with the great critical, crucial event in the Saviour's work for the world's salvation, that we are not surprised that the gospel is called the word of the Cross. The Cross symbolizes the service He did for us. It symbolizes the nature of the service He expects of us. And if it reminds us that the ideal life for man is no smooth, easy progress over carpeted tracks, but strenuous, arduous, often wrestling with things repellent and cruel, it tells us, too, that Christ asks nothing of His followers harder than He has faced for them of His own gracious will, for

Not in soft speech is told the earthly story,
Love of all Loves! that showed thee for an hour;
Shame was thy kingdom, and reproach thy glory,
Death thine eternity, the Cross thy power.

Crucified Unto the World

Gal. vi. 14.—'The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world' (R.V.).

1. WHAT does the Apostle mean by the world? The word is used in Scripture with varying meanings. Sometimes it stands simply for the numbers of our fellow-men and women round about us. And, in that sense, God loves the world—the foolish, ailing, kindly, human, stumbling world—loves it well enough to give His Son for it. And we must learn to love it too. But often the world means that vague, dim, ever-present, threatening mass of things inimical to the soul; the currents that sweep one away from what is high and true and unselfish; the pressure of the crowd about us tending to carry us along with it into the customary, the mean, the earthy; the throng of interests that crowd our minds and leave no room for Christ. Whatever robs God of our allegiance, whatever cheats us out of our inheritance in Him, whatever drags us down and back, that is the world; not necessarily anything evil in itself—that is more the flesh and the devil—but just the fulness of life, the rush of things, our dreams and hopes and ambitions and desires.

Matters quite harmless, even true and beautiful in themselves, can grow into one's world. A man's *home*, says Christ, can become his world—even the wonderful gift of human love! For he may sink back luxuriously into that, grow soft and self-indulgent, and forget that those about him need his help. Or a man's *business*, it seems, can become his world; though surely we are given our talents to use and not to let them rust. Yet we can grow so one-idead, so absorbed in it, that, 'getting and spending, we lay waste our powers'; and the soul, forgotten, left untended, sinks and flickers, and goes out. Our *success* can become our world, and we intemperate for more and more and more of it. If anything is crowding God out of our life, if anything is making us throw aside the dreams and hopes and high purposes with which we started as obviously impracticable, if anything is convincing us that of course Jesus' teaching is mere poetry, and is not meant for literal obedience, that is the world for us. And it is through things like these that souls are mostly lost.

¶ C. S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters* says that years of prosperity are 'excellent campaigning weather' for the Devil. 'Prosperity knits a man to the world. He feels that he is "finding his place in it," while really it is finding its place in him.'

'I pray,' said Christ, 'not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.' We must live in the world, must do our part to keep the great earth spinning round and round. But we must not be of it, must not drift into adopting its aims, its ends, its standards, its ambitions, its methods and ways. And not to do so is hard.

You with your life still in your hand, what are you going to do with it? 'I am dreaming,' says Calderon, 'and I wish to act rightly; for good deeds are not lost, though they be wrought in dreams.' Are you dreaming rightly? What are you going to do with life? Be sure the world will tempt you, wheedle you, coax you, bid

you look at its gifts and ask you where you can find anything so splendid. And yet, before you pay it down, look again at that life of yours. When they asked Christ if one should pay tribute to Cæsar or should not, 'Shew me a penny,' He replied; and looked at it, and then: 'Whose image and superscription is this?' He asked. And they said, 'Cæsar's.' 'Then render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' Look at your life again. It is God's image that you carry; it is for God's use you were fashioned; it is His superscription that you bear. Render to God the thing that is God's, and do not throw it away on what can never satisfy you.

Climb Calvary before you make your choice. Stand under the shadow of the Cross, and, looking up into Christ's face, must you not say, 'I will not live for my own aims and ends and comforts and advancement, I will not throw away my life on selfishness, I will not think first of self-interest. To me to live is Christ. And this world that so haunts me, claims me, follows me, I will not have. I crucify it, nailing it down, however it may coax and plead, however it may writhe and struggle, whatever it may promise for a respite, for a compromise, for just the smallest place within my heart.'

2. But we must take action yet more drastic, Paul maintains. 'I am crucified with Christ,' my evil nature, all that is unworthy in me has been nailed down upon the hard wood. It is not dead as yet. Always it pleads, often it struggles, sometimes it wrenches a hand free. But I remain implacable and force it down once more. And if that is not happening, he declares, if we are not obtaining power from Christ to master our natural failings, then for us, so far, the faith has come to absolutely nothing, and we must take a firmer grip on Christ. Well, is it happening? Is our Christianity having effect upon our character, cleansing our lives, subduing our besetting sins? If not, then what exactly do we think it is for? Our life runs on, and we talk much about our faith, but still follow our natural instincts, do as others do, no better if no worse. He lavishes His grace on us, with what result judged by the hard facts of our daily living? Are we really nailing down to Christ's Cross our own evil ways and nature? Are we dying with Christ, that we may rise with Him into a newer, better, far more splendid life?

¶ Arthur Balfour, the Premier, far on in his life, was looking back across the long years that he had travelled, and discovered, with amazement, that he was still, in all essential features, the same being he was as a boy at Eton—identically so. The thing, he said, alarmed him—that all the discipline of his full life, playing on him for all those decades, had effected so little, had left him, radically, what he was, and fundamentally unchanged.[1]

3. And there is more. That day that Christ spoke of the Cross, and Peter, startled and dismayed, cried to Him that He must not talk like that, Christ said, 'But, Peter, there is nothing singular, except in degree, in anything that I am doing. For every friend of mine must, every day he lives, take up his cross upon his shoulder, and follow in My steps to Calvary.' There is, indeed, only one Saviour. But often our Lord tells us that He needs and claims our help in His saving of the world. We must fill up His sufferings: we must carry on His work, must take His salvation and apply it to the needs and sores of our own time, must catch His spirit, the very spirit of Calvary, and live it out in all our thinking, all our acting, all our living, in politics and business, at home, and in the world. That is what we are for.

And in this babble of self-interest, when every class keeps shouting about rights, and all men's aims appear to be an easier lot, more comfort, greater means, it is for the Church not only to keep preaching more self-sacrifice to others, but for itself to lead the way to that; and for us Christian people to make clear that we still stand to Jesus' teaching, still believe that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth, but in what he can do and be and suffer for his fellows and for God, still hold with all our souls and prove it in our daily living that the real crown of life is service, and the apex of our human glory sacrifice, and the greatest splendour of the world, the thing to aim at, and to covet and to imitate, Christ's Cross. Always it has been when it came with a challenging call to gallantry, to sacrifice, to loss, that religion has swept the world, and rushed men's valiant hearts. And not otherwise will we win them to-day.

¶ They wrong man greatly who say he is to be seduced by ease. Difficulty, abnegation,

[1] A. J. Gossip.

martyrdom, death, are the *allurements* that act on the heart of man. Not by flattering our appetites; no, by awakening the Heroic that slumbers in every heart, can any Religion gain followers.[1]

Renewal from Within

Gal. vi. 15.—'For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature' (R.V.).

We have here one of the most difficult, as well as one of the most crucially important statements in the whole New Testament. It is difficult not so much to understand as to realize. For when it was written the proclamation of a new creation was itself a new statement. But to many generations now it has been so familiar, that our minds find it hard to detect any real novelty since the saying of it has been so often repeated in our ears.

1. In order to recover some of the freshness of its meaning let us reflect first on the difference between making and creating. The making of something new is what we usually call an invention. The first steam-engine, the first aeroplane, the first telephone were, we should say, new inventions. But think next of some great masterpieces of art—a Gothic cathedral, a Madonna of Botticelli, a symphony of Beethoven, a tragedy of Shakespeare—there is nothing here that we should naturally call an invention. But we should certainly agree that the authors of these immortal works were creative artists; and we should easily speak of the works themselves as creations. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was a creation; Stevenson's 'Rocket' was an invention.

What is the difference? One difference at any rate lies here. The value of an invention is instrumental. It gives us a new and more efficient means of doing something which we have done less well or less conveniently before. The genius of the inventor is exhibited in a new arrangement of material, so that matter can be more effectually used for some permanent purpose of the human spirit. And the newness of the invention can be readily and completely described in terms of the arrangement of its outward parts. But the value of an artistic masterpiece on the other hand is not to be an instrument in the doing of something else. It is not to be used, but to be enjoyed. And its newness is itself something inward and indefinable. If a picture or a poem stirs our soul what there is new in it could not be absolutely described by just analyzing the arrangement of colour and line or verbal sound. We call such things creations, because in an indefinable way they embody or express some goodness in themselves, and embody it freshly. They are in themselves good, because they are altogether informed by some spirit of goodness.

2. With such thoughts in our minds we may perhaps apprehend more clearly what we mean by the affirmation that the most creative age in all history was the Christian era. Nothing new was invented then. But manhood itself, as we believe, was born again. God, the supreme heavenly Artist, took hold of human nature, expressed Himself in it afresh, and thereby gave men power from within to lead a really new life.

Consider how profoundly true it is that the life of Jesus Christ Himself was on its human side a new creation, not a new invention. Compare it with the creation which took place when, as science has taught us to affirm, mankind itself was first evolved out of some species of ape. There was indeed a fresh creation then. Spiritual values found expression in man, for which the nature of the ape was not adapted. Yet also it may be truly said that the human physiology, the structure of man's body and brain, was a new invention whether of Nature or of God. It is quite possible to find the same sort of difference between the bodily mechanism of a man and an ape that one would find, say, between a modern engine of elaborate pattern and the simpler models which preceded it. The mechanism of human cells and tissues is observably different, different in kind or species, from that of the ape. The difference can be described in physiological and biological terms. And the human machinery, like the more modern engine, is in many ways a more efficient instrument for serving the purposes of life. Because of the more intricate structure of his body man is capable of infinitely more delicate and varied actions and responses towards his environment than any of the lower animals.

And no doubt it is an attractive idea to suppose that our Lord's human life represents a higher

[1] Thomas Carlyle.

step in evolution above the level of ordinary manhood, just as ordinary manhood itself rises above the level of the other animals. But it may be deeply misleading. For when our Lord came to earth, there was no specific change made in the structure of human cells and tissues. From the point of view of biology and physiology, there was here no difference in kind or species at all. We do not, surely, believe that the general structure of our Lord's body and brain was not the same as that of other men. In fact to believe such a thing would be to impair the whole gospel of Christianity. For it was in our flesh and blood that the Incarnation of the Son of God took place. There lie the wonder and the glory of the Christian message. No one denies that God, if He had so willed, could have fashioned some new kind of angelic being or superhumanity and caused it to appear on the earth. But its appearance would have meant no gospel of redemption to us, who are clearly neither angels nor supermen at all. God had prepared some better thing for us than that. He devised no new machinery of bodily structure, when He took mankind upon Himself in order to deliver it. Our Lord's manhood, His flesh and blood, were simply on the pattern of our own. And yet it was profoundly, incomparably, a new creation. Just as a master artist lays his hand to existing materials and well-tried instruments, and fashions out of them something which expresses a goodness never so expressed before, a new creation the newness of which is from within; so God Himself took hold of human nature as it was and had been, save for sin, and fashioned of it something fit to be exalted to His throne in heaven.

And so the main message of the New Testament is to proclaim to us that in Christ we ourselves can be created anew. Our Lord is the first fruits of a new creation. God's world can be and must be spiritually refashioned from within, so that all may be finally in harmony with Christ. And there is among us through Christ's death and resurrection the presence of a fresh spiritual energy by which we can be apprehended and made conquerors over the evil past which has taken such hold of us. How can a man be born when he is old? In outward fact he certainly cannot be. He is a piece of physical machinery timed to endure for a certain span of living. But so long as he remains a spirit in a body he can be recreated. Without altering his physical machinery God's love in Christ can take hold of him, express itself in him afresh, and make a new man of him.

¶ Hugh Redwood gives this testimony: 'If you should ask me by what authority I talk about the power of Christ to change human nature, I should reply to you simply (and God knows without one word or thought of boasting), because He has changed my nature. I can look anybody in the face to-day—my friends, my colleagues, and what, perhaps, is most difficult of all, the members of my own household and family—and be sure that they know, as I know, that I am really and literally a new creature in Christ Jesus since the day when He came into my life.'

3. The same thought has a wider than individual application. The age in which we live is certainly inventive, rather than creative; just as the Elizabethan age in England was on the whole creative rather than inventive. Then English dramatists, poets, and musicians created works of beauty which make a permanent addition to the spiritual heritage of our race. Now we are devising mechanisms of infinite variety and ingenuity, which are capable of being used for as infinite a variety of purposes good and bad. But we do not seem to know how to use them for the best. Can we look upon them all and say, 'Behold, they are very good?'

Like the Athenians of St Paul's time, we are in danger of so forgetting wherein real newness consists. The Athenians, we are told, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. And yet when the real gospel —good news—came to them, it sounded to them like an old wives' fable. To-day we are more practical than the Athenians. We spend our time in making and using new things as well as in telling and hearing of them. But perhaps, like theirs, our standard of newness is at fault. It may be that the old-fashioned work of missionary societies is doing more to make our world really new than all the marvels of modern science. A million new inventions do not make one new creation; and a new creation, a renewal from within of heart and spirit, is the only sort of newness that really avails in the end.

Let us remember it, as the mind of this generation becomes increasingly absorbed in the handling of fresh mechanical devices, and education is more and more directed towards enabling

it to handle them with greater understanding and efficiency. It is all so exciting and engrossing.

But if we want nothing more from life, we may begin to discover what the old preacher meant when he said, 'All things are full of weariness and there is nothing new under the sun.' It was another sage, he who had been made partaker of the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus, who saw the new heaven and the new earth, and the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. That is the vision which does not grow old, and we shall learn to see it ever clearer and nearer as we are ourselves created anew in the power of Christ.

The Freedom of the Spirit-ruled Life

Gal. vi. 16.—'As many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy' (R.V.).

The letter to the Galatian Christians is sometimes accused of being dry, and remote from our present problems. But in fact it deals with a situation which is constantly recurring in our spiritual life, the difficulty of believing that the gift of Christ is freedom, and of understanding that this freedom finds its perfect exercise in self-disciplined service.

There had been three stages in the religious career of the Galatians. First, before they became Christians, some were Jews, devoted to rigid observance of the Law, others were Gentile pagans, brought up in a creed which fostered belief in cruel deities, who had to be appeased by the performance of an elaborate ritual. From this the preaching of the Apostle had delivered them, with its proclamation of grace freely offered in Christ, raising those who accepted it from slavery into the liberty of the sons of God. The Galatians had received this message with joy, and had become ardent followers of St Paul, who, though hampered with illness when he was among them, allowed nothing to dim the vividness with which he had pictured Christ hanging upon the Cross to redeem mankind. His converts started off impetuously on the Christian course; they were running well. Then came the third stage, which every soul must face. The first enthusiasm dies down, the Hill Difficulty must be climbed, the lions in the way must be passed. The haunting doubt assails, Is Christ alone sufficient? Is it wise to disregard all the old tabus with which once we thought to ward off evil? The superstitions which imply that God is not master of His world, and which lie deep within all of us, come again to the surface. When these misgivings attacked the Galatians there were evil counsellors ready to take advantage of them, the Judaizers, who opposed the gospel preached by the Apostle. 'Buttress your faith in Christ,' they said, 'by careful observance of Mosaic ordinances; then you will be safe.' But to do this was not to complete the gospel, but to destroy it. So St Paul has to do his work all over again. He recalls his readers to walk in the one true path, to obey the one true rule.

1. 'As many as shall walk by this rule.' *Walking*. The word is a favourite description of the religious life in the old Testament. To prophet, psalmist, and historian alike the godly were as children going out under their father's eye, along the path which he chooses. The figure was natural on the lips of a people with historic memories of a long march through the desert, which led them at last to the Promised Land. It was a story of progress when they followed the pillar of fire and the cloud, of weary futility when they wandered out of the way and found no city to dwell in. The choice between Two Ways became proverbial in Hebrew thought, as for example in the First Psalm. Many a time must Paul the Pharisee have heard his teachers expounding it. So he would not be surprised, when he entered the Church of Christ, to find that those already in it spoke of it as 'The Way.' It was a claim that Christians were walking according to the will of God. The boldness of it seems to have annoyed their adversaries, for the five passages in the Acts in which the phrase occurs are all in references to persecution. It was no more popular then than it is now for a Christian to assert that those who follow his Master know where they are going, while others do not.

What is needed in those who have to journey afoot along the roads for many a league? First, their bodies must be fit. On some of the mountains of Britain during the War, one might have seen parties of young men in full kit toiling to the summits. They were in training for the marches they would have to make when they

went to the front. So the spiritual journey can be undertaken only by those who will endure hardness. Next, there must be the alert eye. When fear of invasion caused the removal of signposts on our roads only those who were watchful could choose the right road among many which were often very much alike. So there are many spiritual crossroads where the right turning is discovered only by those who are watching with prayer. Without that the traveller will find himself with Christian and Hopeful when they followed Mr Vain-Confidence down Bypath Meadow to the castle of Giant Despair. But with it he will go the same way as that which the Master is taking. 'That ardent, hurrying figure is always on the road; and, if we desire His company, we must be on the road with Him.'

2. So we pass to St Paul's second word. '*This rule.*' He was writing to those who thought to win salvation by observing meticulously a mass of rules. But it is not to be earned in this way, though many who would be devout still think so. That is the error of legalism, which has many forms, and may beset the members of any Church. But what Tacitus said about the State—that a multitude of laws shows internal weakness—is true also of the individual. The Galatians were going backward when they deserted the simplicity of the gospel for the bondage of the law.

But instantly the Apostle guards against the error of supposing that the door of escape from this bondage is opened in the life which obeys no laws at all. There must be a rule of life, and it must be the rule of Christ crucified. The revolt against a ruled life is one of the marks of the present time. There is a constant demand for the right of what is called unfettered self-expression, licence to allow the impulse of the moment to be our only guide. But the question which is never faced is as to which self we want to express; for there is more than one ethical self in each of us. St Paul's answer to this is that we must walk by a rule—a 'canon' is his word in the Greek—which gives us the standard of measurement. And the measure is the Cross, 'through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'

Meditation on this exacting demand, and on the Apostle's personal experience in illustration of it, may well make us hesitate about accepting the easy opinion that the New Testament never calls for asceticism. For the word means 'exercise,' and St Paul told Felix that it expresses a condition necessary for those who would have a conscience void of offence. Without it we cannot be true disciples of the Master who, after a long day's labour in preaching and healing, spent the night in prayer, and accepted such privation that He had nowhere to lay His head. So He called upon His followers to 'deny themselves,' to turn their backs upon themselves, a strong command which we have whittled down to mean very small sacrifices.

¶ 'All along the Christian course,' writes Alexander Maclaren, 'there must be set up altars to God on which you sacrifice yourself, or you will never advance a step.'

It is a challenge which we cannot escape. Is the Christian profession something which is, in von Hügel's phrase, 'costing' for us? Has prayer its definite set time daily, with which nothing must interfere? Dr Alexander Whyte used to warn his Edinburgh Bible Class against the delusion that having no fixed time for daily prayer was a sign of being spiritually minded. Mark in St Paul's letters how many people he remembered in his prayers. No casual and haphazard praying would have given him time for this. Or almsgiving—is it done from our superfluity, or is it done by rule until it hurts? Or all the many calls to service, never more urgent than they are to-day—is our time carefully arranged, so that we can respond to as many of them as our spiritual and physical strength permits?

¶ If a man say that he loves his family, but, being able, makes no provision for their financial security, spending his income rather in his present pleasures, something is seriously the matter with his love. If a man say that he loves God and his fellows, but does not give till it hurts for their service, his professed love is not likely to be more than a theatrical gesture.[1]

For this ordered life our teacher must be the Holy Spirit. 'If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.' It was the Holy Spirit who brought order out of chaos at creation, and He can guide each soul to walk, not to stand still, but to progress, and to walk by rule, the rule of the life which, because it is spiritually disciplined, knows the secret of the service which is perfect freedom.

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *The Meaning of Service*, 80.

The Brands of the Lord Jesus

Gal. vi. 17.—'From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.'

The urge in man to be branded, indelibly marked, irrevocably sealed, is perhaps as old as history. At least we know that the earliest records of an ancient cult in India—some of the earlier manuscripts extant—refer to the custom as being then immemorial. And it has been persisted in to the present day. Athletes, boxers, sailors, are still not disdainful of the indelible tattoo. Nor is it just a fashion—for sailors, at any rate; to have a cross on the forearm has its purpose in their minds. Against the day when their bodies may be washed up, unhonoured and unknown, on some foreign shore, they claim thereby the chance of Christian burial. To retain one's personality at all costs would seem to be the prior motive.

When St Paul wrote these words, however, the figure had also an almost opposite connotation. In his mind, it would appear, to be 'marked' had more the meaning of losing one's identity than of retaining it. In the era that he adorned, to be marked was more the sign of slavery. It is said of the soldiers who served the great Alexander that many had the 'A' marked upon their wrists because they were happy to be his servants all their days. Nor was slavery always of compulsion in the East. The Jews, whose humanity was often apparent against the background of surrounding peoples, gave most slaves their freedom after seven years; but a man could become a bond servant for ever if he wished. Then his service was lifelong, and only then was he branded.

1. It would be in this sense more than the other that St Paul would call on men no longer to trouble him; for he bore branded on his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. The claim was literal enough. Shipwreck, fastings, the rigours of malaria-infested dungeons; those scars where the stones cut when they pelted him at Lystra—all would substantiate his claim.

¶ The words written of George Fox were still more true of St. Paul: 'Then he grew weakly, being troubled with pains and aches, having had many sore and long travels, beatings, and hard imprisonments.'

If the days in which we live have grown more gracious—if, at least in one's own land, we are no longer tortured for the Faith—it is still in no mere metaphorical sense that men can bear, branded on their body, the marks of the Lord Jesus. We all know saints to-day who bear even outward marks of their devotion. The missionary, home from African swamps, grey and broken before his time; the X-ray pioneer who knew not the power of his own discovery; or the victim of a too-close study of tuberculosis, in the service of the brethren of Christ—all these 'bear about them in their bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus.'

2. There remains a deep spiritual sense in which the Apostle's confession ought to be possible for every Christian. And we shall understand it when we consider how a brand implies at least three things—ownership, advertisement, and genuineness.

(1) A brand implies *ownership*. For this reason farmers brand their sheep, and ranchmen brand their cattle. In like manner, to bear the brands of Jesus Christ means to have Him for our Owner and Possessor. This idea of ownership helps us to understand why the Apostle could say: 'Henceforth let no man trouble me'; because a slave, just by reason of his slavery, is curiously emancipated from half the anxieties which beset people who belong to themselves or to one another. His master finds him his food and raiment, and sets him his work; and so long as he satisfies his master, he need care little for other men's praise or blame. And so slavery, by a kind of paradox, brings with it also detachment and freedom. A strange peace settles into the soul of the man who can say quietly: 'Whether I live, I live unto the Lord; or whether I die, I die unto the Lord; living therefore, or dying, I am the Lord's.'

¶ Francis of Assisi accepted the marks as no man before, or since: yet so free did he feel that the sun became his brother, and mortal death his sister. He obtained not merely the freedom of Perugia: nor even the freedom of the world. He achieved the freedom of the universe!

(2) Again, a brand implies *advertisement*. We can instantly pick out a porter at the railway station, or a policeman in the street. Each of them bears it on his body. And ought there not also to be something about a Christian

which shows plainly whose he is and whom he serves? We may admit this, without advocating any special religious garments or badges, without defending 'these offensively celestial uniforms,' as Ruskin once called them. Surely the brands of Jesus Christ pierce deeper than a costume. And surely, even in the workaday world, we have sometimes met people who carry about with them the very stamp and signature of goodness.

¶ When Père Besson, the French Dominican, went to preach to his countrymen who were in Italy, the Italians themselves flocked to hear him, because they said his face was worth many sermons. Two young Italian soldiers were standing at the edge of the crowd round his pulpit, almost out of reach of the voice which was speaking to them in a strange tongue; and one said to his fellow, 'Look at that man: he is a speaking crucifix!'

(3) Once more, a brand implies *genuineness*. It is the trade mark which guarantees that an article comes from the right factory. People will often wrangle about what they call the notes of the Church, the signs and proofs by which we may distinguish the authentic Communion of the faithful from its spurious imitations. The decisive notes of the Holy Catholic Church must be moral and spiritual tokens. Wherever we meet with a company of Christian men and women who are so tender-hearted, so self-forgetful, so humble, so pure, so brave, that they put us irresistibly in mind of their Saviour, *then*, though we may dislike some points in their order and their discipline, and we may shrink from some clauses in their creed, henceforth let no man trouble us with criticisms and objections: in that fellowship we are conscious of nothing except the wound-prints of Jesus Christ Himself.

THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

By the Reverend R. W. Stewart, B.D., B.Sc.

1. Leaving in Philippi a vigorous and devoted Church, Paul, with Silas his colleague in this second missionary journey, took the great Roman road southward to the Macedonian seaport of Thessalonica, where they must have arrived still bearing the marks of their recent ill-usage. In this city the synagogue was large, and had the usual fringe of devout Gentiles, proselytes or interested listeners; and there Paul preached for three successive Sabbaths. Evidently he stayed in the city for a considerably longer period, for he tells how, besides working at his trade for self-support, he received from the Christians at Philippi repeated gifts towards his maintenance.

When many, especially of the Gentiles, were converted by his preaching, the Jews grew jealous and stirred up opposition. Unable to lay hands on the Apostles, they dragged before the authorities Jason, whose house the Christians had made their headquarters, and some other supporters.

The magistrates of the city, which enjoyed self-government, seem to have arranged some compromise with guarantees against disturbance that required the departure of Paul and Silas. The missionaries therefore betook themselves to Beroea, and then to Athens and Corinth.

The ill-will and even persecution did not, however, cease, and the infant Church was left with much to endure without the presence of its founder. Paul was naturally anxious to hear how it fared. He knew too that it was being said that he had willingly slipped away to safety, leaving others to bear the brunt of trouble; and he longed for assurance that his friends did not believe the slander.

In these circumstances the Apostle sends his young companion Timothy back from Beroea or Athens to get news. Timothy returns to find Paul now at Corinth, and to gladden him with tidings of the steadfastness and loyalty and affection of his converts. This immediately moves Paul to pour out his thoughts and feelings about them in this letter known as 1 Thessalonians, and despatch it by some friend or messenger.

Soon afterwards, perhaps on the return of this messenger, Paul receives further news of the Thessalonian Church, particularly about some disorders that were arising from the expectation of the immediate coming of the day of the Lord. So he writes a second letter in which, while still rejoicing in their faithfulness, he deals with this difficulty.

Both letters are to be dated from Corinth, about A.D. 53, shortly before or after the Epistle to the Galatians.

2. Like the rest of the New Testament these letters have been subjected by critical scholarship to the closest scrutiny, in the course of which every question that ingenuity could find or invent has been reviewed. In connection with other epistles such study has been rewarding. The discussion whether Galatians was addressed to Churches in North or South Galatia involves real problems about Paul's journeys and early church history. The situation in Corinth and the Apostle's relations with its Church are illuminated by the close examination of the Epistles to the Corinthians. By critical studies light is thrown from various angles on the message of Romans. But in the case of the two Epistles to the Thessalonians the results are singularly insignificant. Theories that the writer was a later imitator of Paul, or that he was Silas, or that what is called the Second Epistle should really come first, or that there were two churches in Thessalonica, one Jewish, one Greek, all raise more difficulties than any real or imaginary problems they propose to solve. The perusal of the mass of such exercises in scholarly research and speculation adds little of

serious importance to what may be gathered quite simply from the letters themselves and the narrative given in Acts.

3. According to Greek mythology, Pallas Athene sprang, with a war-shout, fully armed from the head of Zeus. Perhaps the first and most remarkable point to notice about these two letters is that they show how the Christian Church sprang into sudden existence possessed of a transcendent faith, fired with highest courage, aware of its apostolic foundation and its unity, the recipient of communications worthy to be cherished as a perpetual heritage.

Paul, a missioner not yet with much experience, makes a short visit to this town, preaches on three Sabbaths in the synagogue, and remains a few more weeks; and he leaves behind a Christian community that he addresses as, in the full sense that the word came to have, a Church, which feels itself part of a World Church, which acknowledges as its head the Lord Jesus Christ, which has martyrs and office-bearers and a thrilling sense of new life, a Church the existence of which was news far and wide.

To this infant Church Paul writes, confident that they have a firm hold of a large block of Christian truth. They are a Church 'in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'—that is its constitution. Here, and in repeated doxology and benediction, Jesus is given a place with God. The Christian community is pervaded by the hope of immortality, and characterized by the personal purity and brotherly love of its members. Where the Apostle dwells on these matters his words have timeless validity.

There are, however, passages which had a special relevance to the place and the hour. The passionate vindication of Paul's own reputation with which his first letter opens is to be taken in connection with his exhortation to be 'imitators of us and of the Lord.' He could not, like a modern minister of a Christian congregation, bid his converts look rather to the character of Jesus as seen in the Gospels than to whatever poor reflection of it might be seen in his own life. For the Thessalonians had no Gospels to read. They were dependent on the Apostle's character for their impressions of practical Christianity. The strenuous self-defence has therefore its motive, not in mere personal sensitiveness, but in the fact that his reputation was integral and essential to his message. Paul's attitude is a reminder that even yet, whenever a Christian witness is in contact with a circle who have no familiarity with the Scriptures or with a definitely Christian way of life—and that means in much Home as well as Foreign Mission effort—character and reputation are of critical importance.

Then it appears that it just had not occurred to Paul to touch upon the possibility that some converts might in the course of Nature die before the Second Coming of the Lord. Thus it came about that a gap was felt in his teaching which left room for perplexity in the minds of some mourners for the dead in Christ. In the fourth chapter of the first letter Paul gives the supplementary statement required, in words that have been in use ever since for the comfort of the bereaved.

A curious feature emerging in the second letter is that Paul had used in his teaching a saga, widely spread in Jewish circles, about 'Beliar' or 'the man of sin,' who was to arise in Jewry as an Anti-Christ, and be overthrown at the advent of the Messiah. In rebuking some Thessalonians who were unwholesomely excited and distracted from common duties by the belief that the day of the Lord was just at hand, and were maintaining that the Apostle had so taught, Paul is able to point out that by the use of that myth he had explicitly indicated that the day of the Lord would be delayed till these preliminary events had come to pass. And for the present these events were obviously held in check by what is cryptically referred to as a 'restraining power.' This makes a complete answer to the distortion of his teaching.

The Thessalonians seem to have been as impressed by the saga as Paul was. But what is the modern reader to make of this intriguing prognostication about the 'man of sin?' It is best to recognize that he can make little. The idea that had so caught the Apostle's fancy that he made use of it in preaching, seems soon to have faded out of his mind, though it leaves a trace in the Epistles of John. History contains no event corresponding to it. Research throws little light on its origin. In that age the only interpretation to give to the 'restraining power' would be the Roman rule.

The truth probably is that the whole matter was just as vague and mysterious to Paul as it

sounds to the modern reader. He had no clearer notion about the 'man of sin,' or where or how in Jewry he was to arise, and attempts to expound the matter are futile and profitless. The point that can be taken—and it is implicit, though not what Paul is stressing—is that we are not going to slip without a jerk into the millennium. While the consummation draws nearer evil will grow stronger and more terrible. The coming of the Lord will not be the end of evolution or the terminus of a procession but His shattering intervention in a battle that has reached a furious climax.

One other matter may trouble some readers: the stern satisfaction expressed in both letters at the prospect of the judgment which will overtake unbelievers and persecutors. It is of course open to any who care to suggest it to say that here Paul descends to an Old Testament level, and is hardly faithful to the standard of Christian love. But it must be remembered that the words come from one who had crept into Thessalonica weakened and still marked by the scourging inflicted on him at Philippi, and that they were written to those suffering or in danger of suffering similar cruelty. Would such critics of Paul have denied to the victims of Nazi atrocities in our own day any right to take comfort in the thought of God's judgment on evil?

Contemplating the Dawn

1 Thess. i. 2, 3.—'We give thanks to God always for you all . . . remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father' (R.V.).

It is good for us all in times like the present to contemplate the dawn of the Church's existence, for it was a lovely dawn pregnant with promise. Paul, that indefatigable bond-servant of Christ, is addressing the first of his messages to the Churches 'to the assembly of Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' He has no doubts that that small and motley group of Jews and pagans is 'in God,' that God is 'Father,' that Jesus is 'Lord' and 'Christ.' He is ebulliently thankful to God the Father, always, for all of them, bearing in mind continually, despite his innumerable calls, his many anxieties, and his unceasing efforts to propagate the good news, three outstanding characteristics of his converts—their work resulting from faith, their activity prompted by love, and their endurance sanctioned by hope 'in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.' Faith, hope, love—in that order. The Apostle was able to appreciate these gifts in his converts because they lay at the foundation of his own ministry.

These, it would seem plain, are precisely the gifts needed to-day by all those who, disappointed and anxious, are toiling to direct the steps of their fellows into the way of life.

1. First, faith—the faith that achieves. This is the first time that the word 'faith' occurs in the New Testament, and we must be careful not to read into it meanings which it gathered to itself in later days. Here it does not connote 'resting in God,' or passive trust. It implies that its possessors have ceased to place their confidence in the dead idols and have transferred their allegiance to 'the living and genuine God,' for the purpose of serving Him. It is not a faith (if there be such) that solves all the mysteries of life, and supplies clear-cut explanations of all life's problems. It is an attitude of the inner self toward God, first, then towards life and its difficulties. It does not so much solve problems as master them. Hartley Coleridge might have had in mind this phrase of the Apostle, 'work of faith,' when he uttered the well-known lines:

Think not the faith by which the just shall live
  Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
Far less a feeling fond and fugitive,
  A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given,
It is an affirmation and an act
  That bids eternal truth be present fact.

This first appearance of 'faith' conjoined with 'work' reveals how far the Apostle is removed from approving either a merely theoretical or sentimental faith. In his later Epistles he contrasts 'faith' and 'works,' that is, Pharisaic 'works of law,' supposed to be meritorious to earn salvation by right and as a matter of obligation on God's part. No such notions are in his mind here. Faith is an operative principle of life, a working power. It is a daily practical effort to master circumstances; and this is precisely what all servants of Christ need urgently to-day. They need to

be up and doing, and achieving, inspired by their faith.

2. The next great phrase of the text is 'labour of love,' or 'the toilsome activity prompted by love.' It is a unique phrase, hewn out of the circumstances of the group of Thessalonian Christians.

There is a distinction to be drawn between 'work' and 'labour' (or toil). 'Work' calls attention to the thing done, the achievement; 'labour,' to the process of doing it, the pains and exertions that issue in achievement. The Apostle does not state precisely what form this 'toil' takes, because the readers knew well enough its nature; but, reading between the lines, we can see that it involved devoted service to fellow-believers, courageous attempts to persuade pagans to give up their idols for the acknowledgment of the one living and genuine God, loss of old friendships, and, in some cases, loss of means of livelihood, and much physical and mental suffering. Only love of their newly found God, and resultant love for their fellows, could prompt them to toil on and ever, and sustain them in their efforts.

Such a burning love the Church of Christ, and each individual member of the Church, needs sorely in our times. We look about us and see our fellows ignoring the things which alone ultimately matter. We realize painfully how much they are missing. If only we could persuade them—either by our words or by our lives. . . . We cry with Faber:

Souls of men! why will ye scatter
Like a crowd of frightened sheep?
Foolish hearts! why will ye wander
From a love so true and deep?

But there are few to heed. Some industrious souls are tempted to relax. They have tried so often and apparently in vain. Have they not seen Jesus? He has journeyed with them, and has not their love for Him deepened with the days? Yes, they must keep on without flagging. Did not the Master Himself confront the same problems, the same apathy and ingratitude? There is no Apostle to thank God for their 'labour of love.' What of it? The Master knows and understands. Enough! Our fellows need us, even though all unconsciously. We must not let them down; we must not let Him down.

3. 'Remembering your patience of hope,' or, 'your endurance inspired by hope.' Here there is no suggestion of resignation, of the acquiescent folding of hands, but rather of the 'patient continuance in good work.' It means carrying on when there is nothing left but the will to carry on. The phrase is better understood in the light of Milton's constancy that 'bears up and steers right onward' than in his 'They also serve who only stand and wait.'

¶ Flaubert speaks of himself in regard to his work as 'sick, irritated, the prey a thousand times a day of cruel pain, but continuing my labour like a true working-man, who, with sleeves turned up, in the sweat of his brow, beats away at his anvil, whether it rain or blow, hail or thunder.'

Nor is the hope which inspires endurance hope in the abstract; it is a hope whose object is Christ as Lord in the presence of God the Father, the hope of salvation here and hereafter. Only hope thus firmly based can inspire perseverance despite all obstacles in the path.

In the demeanour of these early Christians we witness the Christian life being lived in its simplest and most abiding elements, a faith which had its outward effects upon their lives, a love that spent itself in the service of God and fellow-men, a hope that was no transient feeling, but was content to endure 'till the day break.' This must be our demeanour to-day.

Spirit of God, who didst endow
Thy Church on fair Thessalia's shore
With gifts sublime,
Grant to Thy Church which battles now
The same three boons (we crave no more)
To meet our time.

Grant her the faith which never fails,
That trusts her Lord, though He should slay,
Or hide His face;
A glowing faith that e'en prevails
To work, when night blots out the day,
Thy works of grace.

Grant her the love which knows no fear,
And loves when love reaps no reward
To ease her load;
That toils and sweats, when toil is drear,
In storm and stress, 'gainst fire and sword,—
Calvary's road!

Grant her the hope which sees, though blind,
The stars set in abysmal murk
Of dread and doubt;
That perseveres, though heart and mind
Be sick, sure that her Lord will work
His purpose out.

What is Christianity?

1 Thess. i. 5.—'Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power.'

THERE is nothing more familiar to the western world than Christianity, and yet nothing is more misunderstood. Ask the question 'What is Christianity?' even among professing Christians and we find a diversity of answer, from dogmatic certainty at the one extreme to vague generality at the other; whilst among those who make no Christian profession the variety of answer is as wide as human experience. By some, Christianity is dismissed as an irrational superstition, while by others it is accepted as a beautiful idealism though linked to impossible dogmas. In increasing numbers Christ attracts whilst Christianity repels.

But obviously Christ is central to the religion which He founded, and our answer to the question 'What is Christianity?' must keep that fact ever in mind. Such answer may be stated under three heads.

1. *Christianity is belief about Christ.*—This is not the whole of Christianity, but we cannot have Christianity without it. Thus we may believe that Jesus Christ was Man or God, or both at once, 'very God and very Man,' but if Christianity is to be more than a name or a label, we must define the meaning of Christ for our own experience. What am I to do with Him, what is His relationship to me and mine to Him, what is the basis of His authority over my life and the life of the world? The answer to these and all such questions means formulated beliefs *about* Christ.

Think of the history of our Christian faith from this point of view. At the outset Jesus demanded belief about Himself. He asked, 'Whom do you say that I am?' That is to say, He wanted His disciples to define their thoughts in regard to His Person as an essential part of their Christian life. And so, later, it became necessary for the Church to justify its Christian faith in contact with pagan belief, the world's philosophy, and heresy within its own ranks. Thus there came into being a body of Christian doctrine, a system of theology by which men's beliefs about Christ—His relation to God, man, time, eternity—were all duly formulated and then scheduled as articles of faith. In this way Christianity came to be identified with a specific creed.

It is this identification which prejudices Christianity to the open mind, for Christianity as a system of belief about Christ seems to be something to be accepted, not questioned, something based on authority, not on experience. Therefore it is necessary to be clear on this point. If Christianity is to be real for me, it must be my thought and my experience, not someone else's, which is the basis of my creed.

Nevertheless we must beware of reducing Christianity to just what any one chooses to think, or believe, or affirm, as Christian truth. Christianity on the intellectual side is not pure subjectivism. On the contrary the strength of Christianity lies in the fact that at its centre is an objective Truth embodied in the Man Christ Jesus; and so our business is not to hold any view we like and then give it a Christian label, but to explore the Truth in Jesus Christ and relate it to our own life.

The important thing is that our confession of faith shall be based both on authority and on experience. So then, while Christianity is belief about Christ, behind Christian belief there always lies the more vital fact of Christian experience.

2. *Christianity is living like Christ.*—The reproduction of Christ's life in the world of to-day is the solution of all human problems, personal and social. It is the failure to live like Christ that is the root cause of all the world's maladies. But there precisely is our difficulty, for it is possible to see the true life in Jesus Christ and yet not to live it. We feel it to be beyond our human power. We must all agree with Paul's profound psychology in his Epistle to the Romans: 'When I would do good, evil is present with me, for I delight in the Law of God in my inmost soul, but I see another law

in my members bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.'

I like, mislike, lament for what I could not:
I do, undo, yet still do what I should not:
And, at the self-same instant, will the thing I would not.

What is needed, therefore, is power to translate the ideal into life, some reinforcement of our personality whereby we can prove our Christianity by actually living like Christ and reacting to the world as He did. An ethical example like that of Jesus is an excellent tonic if we feel it to be within our power, but otherwise it merely induces despair and revolt. And so, while Christianity includes 'belief about Christ' and implies 'living like Christ,' something further is required if Christianity is to be within the realm of the immediately practicable.

3. *Christianity is contact with Christ.*—This is seen very clearly in the earthly life of Jesus. His first followers became attached disciples through the contagion of His presence, contact with His personality; and then in yielding to that presence miracles were wrought, things which caused men to marvel and which still awake our wonder.

And such miracles were not confined to individuals; a common contact with Jesus Christ issued in the emergence of a new society which was known as the Church. And so it came to be that, while world empires fell, contact with the life of Christ enabled the Church to survive as an instance, however imperfect, of what a Christian social order ought to be.

All this was accomplished and the humanly impossible was made possible through contact with Jesus Christ. There was communicated by His personality something which turned weakness into strength. But the possibility of such miracles did not pass with the passing of Jesus. We, too, can begin where the first disciples began—with a consideration of Christ's person, a study of the gospel portrait; and to do so is to meet an intellectual challenge and to begin to formulate 'belief about Christ.' Then—as a fact of spiritual biography—there follows some such process as this: as we face the historic fact of Christ there presses upon us a sense of obligation; we feel that we ought to 'live like Christ'; we try to do so and we fail; and then from this endeavour and this failure there comes the greatest discovery of all, for Christ becomes to us the standard of our idea of God.

The Love on the Cross was not merely a historic but a spiritual fact, and the Living Presence which we find in Nature and in the human heart has a definite character which is the character of Jesus Christ. Consequently to turn to God through Christ in worship and in prayer, to give our soul's response to the moral beauty and grandeur of Christ's life is perforce to establish contact with the living power of God Himself.

It is this Divine Power that is the characteristic gift of Christianity. If we need proof of this, we can turn to the Christian experience of the centuries or of to-day. The missionary effort of the Church is our most dramatic witness in these days as it was in the day when Paul bore witness that his gospel came to the Thessalonians 'not in word only, but also in power'; for by this power souls are still transformed, the bonds of sin in human life are broken; despair, fear, anxiety are removed and burdens made endurable.

But this Divine Power within the soul reaches beyond the individual and makes for the redemption of society; it is the impulse behind all enduring human fellowship. Only when men are at one with God are they truly at one each with the other; and so in this Christian contact with the Unseen is the means, and the only means, whereby the problems of the social order can finally be solved and earth endowed with the likeness of heaven.

¶ Vera Brittain describes a visit of her friend Winifred Holtby to South Africa. There she sensed at once the bitter racial antipathy between black and white. Five and a half million black people were being kept in a state of inferiority by one and a half million white people. Hatred and fear smouldered in the people's hearts. The whole atmosphere was charged with tension. She wrote: 'The situation here is quite terrible.' The acute discomfort of the smouldering resentment and the foreboding of coming upheavals made her utterly miserable. Then, in her travels, she came to Lovedale Mission. Here was something quite different. She found a small number of white people living in the midst of twenty thousand natives, yet with the most complete ease of

mind. These white Christian missionaries slept confidently on the ground floor with open windows and doors. They walked out alone and talked freely with the natives. She was deeply impressed with the sane and serene atmosphere of the Mission as compared with the apprehension and hatred everywhere else.[1]

The Consecrated Life

1 Thess. i. 9, 10.—'And how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven.'

HERE is a good definition of a Christian. He is one who has turned and is now serving and waiting. All three verbs are important, but not equally so. For a full Christian life all three are necessary. Without one or other of the latter two there is something seriously defective; and without the first there is no Christianity at all.

1. *There are some who have turned and are waiting, but not serving.* Little need be said of this for it is not a common error; yet it does exist in certain circles. One has heard of a lady who became so convinced of our Lord's immediate return in the clouds of heaven at Jerusalem that she gave up her home, settled in the Holy City, and, when a near relative of hers was returning from the Far East in ill-health, refused to go even to Port Said to see him lest the Lord should come during her brief absence from Jerusalem. That is an extreme case; but the same thing in a measure may be seen in many Christians belonging to branches of the Church which stress the Second Coming. With some it becomes an obsession, so that they neglect the tasks and responsibilities of Christian service through waiting and watching for the Lord's Return.

2. *There are some who have turned and are serving, but not waiting.* That is true of many of us. We are not waiting for God's Son from heaven, and that in a double sense, corresponding to the double sense which may be given to the idea of Christ's coming.

On the one hand that may mean His coming to each one of us at our own death, according to the Word—'if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.' On the other hand it may mean what is usually known as the Parousia or Second Coming. Is it too much to say of most of us that, without denying these two comings of the Lord, we are not waiting for them?

Let us admit that we cannot anticipate the Second Coming exactly as St Paul's Thessalonian readers did—an immediate visible event, a literal coming in the clouds at any moment. But there is to be a day of the Lord, a day of reckoning, a climax to the present stage of human history. The Second Coming is no mere outworn trapping of Jewish thought which in more enlightened days we may discard. It is of the essence of the faith. The victory which our Lord won at Calvary over sin and death is yet to be completely realized and made manifest to all the world. He taught us to pray, 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.' The doctrine of the Second Coming proclaims the Christian assurance of that final triumph of God's Will which is the ultimate justification of our trust in God. Without that assurance our Christian service will lack something both of zeal and of imperturbability, both of persistence and of patience in dark hours.

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.
Hallelujah!

As much must we say of the waiting for our Lord's coming to each of us at death. Too little have we appropriated the full gospel of the Resurrection. Too often do we think of death as the ultimate tragedy, the quenching of our fairest hopes, the last word in evil; too seldom do we think of it as the Lord's coming to receive His own to Himself. This lack of waiting, also, may affect our Christian service adversely. We are to serve the living and true God with that element of detachment which comes from recognizing that our time is short at the best and that the Lord may call us at anytime, leaving others to carry on the work, but that we are immortal till our work is done.

One cannot deny the name of Christian to servants of the Lord who may lack this expectant waiting, any more than one can deny it to those with whom this waiting has become an obsession;

[1] C. Leslie Mitton.

but the New Testament does suggest that the full Christian life demands this forward look both to our own death and to the triumph of Christ on the scale of the universe.

¶ Fr. Ronald Knox says, in one of his writings, that he dare not claim to be morally prepared for Christ's coming; but that he is intellectually prepared. I would say the same. No one would venture to say, 'I am fit to meet my Master.' One may surely say, 'That He should come would not surprise me, for I am looking for it.'[1]

With parted lips and outstretched hands
And listening ears thy servant stands,
Call thou early, call thou late,
To thy great service dedicate.

3. *There are some who are serving and, perhaps in some modified sense, waiting, but they have never turned.*—It may seem a hard thing to say that they are not Christians at all, but the New Testament confirms it. 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Notice, here are people serving the Lord, yes, serving Him in dramatic and successful fashion, yet He knows them not. Mere zeal for Christ's cause is no guarantee that we are the genuine brand of Christian. Without this preliminary turning all our service is no Christian service, and we cannot make our service a substitute for our turning.

There is a place for service in the Christian life, but it is as a consequence of salvation, not as its cause. We do not serve God in order that He may save us. He saves us in order that we may serve Him. No multiplying of activities or austerities can take the place of Christian faith, and faith means precisely this turning to the living and true God from idols—first from that biggest idol of all which is just ourselves as the centre of our little world, and then from all the idols of the mind, false ideals and mean ambitions. It is from these we must turn. Is it not possible that in some of our Christian service we are really hiding from God and trying to evade His coming to grips with us?

¶ Many Chinese offer to their gods what to them is one of the most precious things they have—the pig. It used to be that the whole was offered. Now they offer the severed head with the severed tail in its mouth—and keep the body for themselves! With us there is a good deal of offering of that kind—we offer the more or less useless remnants and keep the essential self intact. We offer our service and withhold the self.[2]

One has sometimes been perturbed and even shocked in reading the works of the old evangelical preachers to notice how insistent they are that unregenerate man can do nothing good. All the virtues of the heathen, they say, are but splendid vices. One feels that in such statements there is an intolerance and pharisaic quality that is far from the mind of Christ. Yet, perhaps these old preachers were expressing in a wrong way something quite right, important and even vital, namely, that to offer Christ a great many things that He does not supremely want is an insult, if we have not first given Him the thing which He does supremely want—ourselves. If that sounds a hard saying to some of us, then we are the very people who need to take it to heart. All the service we are capable of is no substitute for turning to our Saviour and receiving Him. We cannot serve Him acceptably till we have turned to Him and received Him. A Christian is one who has turned to God from idols, chiefly from that biggest and subtlest idol of all—self. Only when we have done that are we able to receive all that God has to give us in Christ—forgiveness, cleansing, the Holy Spirit, life eternal, the power to serve Him and to wait for His Son from heaven.

Trustees of the Gospel

1 Thess. ii. 4.—'We were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel.'

It would be true to say that all we have and are should be held by us as a sacred trust from God—our souls, our bodies, our time, our possessions—

We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

But above all other trusts, the text declares, 'we are put in trust with the gospel.'

[1] Peter Green, *This Our Pilgrimage*, 12.

[2] E. Stanley Jones, *Victorious Living*, 114.

1. *A God-given Trust.*—The one word 'gospel' suggests to us the nature of it, something which in itself is specially of God, not of His power simply, or of His knowledge alone, but of that which is deepest and best in the Divine nature. It is not simply a proclamation from a king to his subjects, though the man to whom that was entrusted would feel himself charged with heavy responsibility, but the revelation of the very nature of Deity, and how that nature has wrought, and is working, for the salvation from sin and its consequences of this lost and ruined world.

It ought to quicken our sense of the unspeakable importance of faithfully preserving this trust—not tampering with it, not allowing ourselves to be persuaded that there is anything in the world that can be a substitute for this which the Christian Church has in trust.

The gospel comes from God, not from men. It is not man's highest idealism; it is God's Word, His last word to the universe. Last of all He sent unto them His Son. The gospel is concerned primarily not with what we ought to do for God, but with what God has done for us. It rests for its validity not on that ephemeral thing—the prevailing fashion of thought: in the message with which we have been entrusted we are speaking God's speech after Him, His mouthpiece: our business is God-given and God-authenticated.

We were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel. God gives to us, His believing people, this unique privilege. We declare the Word of God which we have received from Jesus Christ. It is told that in Boston, opposite the church where he exercised so notable a ministry, there stands a statue of Phillips Brooks. But the sculptor, with a genuine Christian instinct, has not represented the preacher as standing alone. For behind him there is seen the figure of Christ. And that Divine presence is with every faithful preacher of the Word, giving higher authority to the preacher's utterance. It is a God-given trust; and while this fact applies in a special sense to preaching, it is true concerning all who love the gospel, and who seek to commend it to others, both in word and in action.

2. *The Urgency of the Trust.*—There is no time to be lost in the declaration of the gospel; for the tragic condition of the world demands the good news of God's saving power as perhaps never before in the history of mankind.

Browning in a famous poem describes how they brought the good news from Ghent to Aix. Three men, galloping into the midnight, with news that was to save a city. Speed was everything. In silence they kept the great pace. At dawn one horse staggers and dies with a groan, and only two are left. When the spire of Aix begins to show white in the distance and Joris gasps 'How they'll greet us!' his horse suddenly rolls over, dead as a stone; and all hangs now on a solitary horseman.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
. . . . .
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.
And all I remember is—friends flocking round.

The urgency in news-telling is there summed up, not only for the seventeenth but for every century. Preaching—the abiding missionary enterprise of the Church—is there essentially portrayed. The man has a message. It does not depend on him for its credibility or authority, as it would do if he were galloping to tell the world his private fancies and latest excogitations. He delivers what he has received. He is neither uncertain nor half-hearted nor apologetic about his trusteeship, or he would hardly gallop with such confident and disinterested urgency. One thing is primary and fundamental—a courier must get there.

3. *The Administration of the Trust.*—It has no sectional or local interests. It has a universal application. News is fact published abroad. News that is robbed of its fulness ceases to be news. The gospel keeps nothing back. It makes no reservations on behalf of race or culture or nationality or rank. It may be illustrated under three heads.

(1) Our trust with the gospel is tested in the world of *social and economic relationships.* People easily slip into a way of advocating the faith for the wrong reasons, not for the fundamental reason that here is God's redeeming word to men, but for the secondary reason that

it has desirable social effects. Too many people act as though they accepted the definition of religion given by Höffding—'the conservation of socially recognized values.' A disastrous definition! The religious man believes in God because He is God, not because the belief conserves socially recognized values. Whose values? Those of the few who have, or of the many who have not?

¶ There is a well-known story of Voltaire stopping an atheistic conversation at his dinner-table until the butler should have left the room. He explained that he did so out of concern for his silver.

One may read that the Duke of Wellington used to go to church 'to set a good example to the common people.' Well—it is the wrong reason for going to church. The worship of Almighty God has to be disinterested or it is not true worship. It serves no private interests. The faith is not wedded to this or that economic or social system. It is a bulwark against Godlessness and materialism, wheresoever they are found.

(2) Our trust is tested in *the international sphere*. Geographical boundaries cannot in any sense limit our duties towards our brothers everywhere for whom Christ died. And to-day, when a new world conception of international relations is called for, the Church cannot afford (to put it on the lowest plane), to be timid or silent on the great issue. A Church that really leaves it to economists and politicians to say what she ought—because of the implicit logic of her gospel—to be saying is forfeiting her right to moral leadership. If our Christianity is to be honest we must be prepared to insist that commerce and industry exist for the service of humanity.

(3) The test is also in the sphere of *denominational loyalties*. The New Testament principle is that where there is a group of people believing in Christ, gathered together for worship, fellowship and service—there is the Church. Such a group may be found in any church.

The deep central classical things in our faith belong to the whole Church. Divisions innumerable within the Church have never given one party or another a monopoly of the great message of Incarnation, Atonement, Eternal Life. We cannot put a sectarian ring fence round the certainty of God's redeeming grace in Christ. We cannot fence tables and make them the occasion of bigotry when all the time Thomas Aquinas and Philip Doddridge sit together at the same table and sing the same song. We cannot make denominational capital out of joy and peace in believing. For these things belong to the ages, and we are allowed by God to be put in trust with the news of them.

The prime obligation and privilege of all Christians is to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The world is crying aloud, now consciously, now unconsciously, for a new world. You cannot have a new world without God. There can be no true sociology without a true theology as its presupposition. That is the first thing. And there can be no true theology which does not touch life at every point and transforms it. That is the second complementary thing.

God has spoken to us in His Son. This speech, this Word, is our foundation, our joy, our challenge. We are allowed by God to be entrusted with the good news of it. He that calleth us is faithful.

The Word of God

1 Thess. ii. 13.—'For this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe' (R.V.).

THIS is a verse which touches upon a very fundamental point, namely, the question why the Bible is to us what it is—why we think of it differently to other books, and why we go to it as the ultimate and supreme authority in matters of faith and conduct. It is also a text of great value, because it not only tells us why the Bible is such an authority, but reveals to us something of the process by which it comes to be this authority.

It is true that the verse contains no reference to the Bible. It does not even refer to a written book. The Apostle is speaking of his first preaching at Thessalonica. His words are confined to this: they say nothing about the preaching of other apostles; still less about the prophets or any other part of the Old Testament.

But we are justified in taking the verse to express the principle which underlies the whole Biblical revelation.

1. St. Paul calls his own preaching the Word of God. We call the Bible the Word of God,

and of all the reasons we can give for so calling it the best is that we are following St. Paul's example. We take this particular sample of his teaching as standing for the whole, and we take St. Paul as typical of the other writers of the New Testament, as we might with equal justice take Isaiah or Jeremiah as typical of other writers of the Old. What is true of St Paul we believe to be substantially true of Isaiah or Jeremiah; and directly or indirectly applicable to the whole of both Testaments.

He thought of his own preaching as being in fact the word not of men but of God; and it is a thing for which he gives thanks solemnly to God that the Thessalonians with open and candid minds took it in the same sense in which he took it himself.

Of course, from one point of view, his preaching was emphatically the word of men. In writing to another Church—the Church at Corinth—he reminds them that his first preaching of the gospel had been not only the word of men, but of a shattered, nervous, and in some respects very unimpressive man. 'I was with you,' he said, 'in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom.'

It shows that a man and his utterances may be thoroughly and most genuinely human, and not only human, but with the infirmities of humanity, and yet not interfere in the least with his conviction that the words which he speaks are the words of God. The conviction of St Paul on this head could not be stated more unequivocally than it is in the text.

If we consider the language which the Apostle uses, it will suggest a rather different solution for one of the problems of the present day from that which one often hears. It is a common answer when objection is taken to a number of things in the Bible to say that they belong to the human element in it, and not to the Divine. But St Paul does not set the Divine against the human; he speaks of the Divine Word as spoken through the human organ. To all appearance it is the word of man, but really it is the Word of God. It is a man that speaks. And yet that same man has an assured and certain belief that the words put into his mouth are the words of God. We cannot think that this belief is simply delusion. If we did think it the conclusion would be belied by the effect of the words spoken. How inadequate, to all seeming, were the means by which Christianity conquered the world! Well might the Apostle say, 'Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? It was God who chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.' It was His doing. Truly there was the weakness and fear, and much trembling; but behind all this, shining through it as it were, was the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

Observe the clause which comes at the end of the text. The Thessalonians had accepted the Apostle's message not as the word of man, but 'as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.' The Word is compared to a sort of leaven fermenting powerfully in the Christian society. It acts like the forces of Nature; secretly, but with irresistible might, it subdues the hearts of men that they may go forth and subdue others. In the times when Christianity owed nothing to custom and tradition, and when all the ways of ordinary society tended to draw men away from it, what drew them to it, and held them to it despite all persecution, was the power of its life. Naturally, this was the element which could give least account of itself. Many were drawn by the testimony of the moral power of Christianity; a few by the satisfaction which it gave to the reason, but life calling to life was the one victorious power which mastered men and women of all conditions.

2. These facts have a double aspect. They serve to emphasize at one and the same time the human element and the Divine element in Holy Scripture. They show that it is no less Divine because thoroughly human, and no less human because essentially Divine.

Opinion used to be divided into two camps. There was the great mass of Christian people on the one hand, who took the Bible as the law of their lives and turned to it without doubt or question as the very Word of God Himself. Opposed to them was another camp, who pointed to this feature and to that as unworthy of a Divine origin, and as proof that the Bible was not in any true sense the Word of God at all. There seemed at that time to be no choice except between these two opinions. All Divine or all human were the two alternatives, and they were alternatives by which thoughtful and candid minds were sometimes not a little troubled. If they accepted the first, and

loyally held the belief that the Bible did come from God, then it seemed as if they had to explain away things that were really there. An uncomfortable feeling was left behind that objections had not been honestly faced. And in like manner the candid opponent who took his stand upon these objections had to confess that with all his endeavours he could not find for himself a theory of life which was higher and better than that which he found there.

The truth, however, was that there was really a third position, not identical with either. This third position is not a mere compromise. In the text Paul does not suggest that we should parcel out the Scripture and say such and such things are human, and such and such things are Divine. It teaches us to expect that there will be much in Holy Scripture which is at once very human and very Divine. The two aspects are not incompatible with each other; rather are they intimately united. Look at them in one light and you will see the one; look at them in another light and you will see the other; but the substance of that which gives these different impressions is one and the same.

If we look at the Bible from one side, everything about it seems natural. Its text has been subject to the same vicissitudes as the text of other books—indeed, to more, because it was more often copied than other books, and in the old days, when books were multiplied by hand, every fresh copy meant the introduction of some fresh accidental error, which was only partially guarded against by revision. But because in all this it is natural, is it not, therefore, also supernatural?

¶ Bishop Westcott once said about the Bible —'Because I have always tried to read the Bible like any other book, I came at last to the conclusion that it was unlike any other book in the world.'

The very same researches which bring out its naturalness also proclaim that it is supernatural. They proclaim that there breathes through it the Spirit of God. They make it clear that the human authors felt themselves to be moved by the Holy Spirit, and that not in spite of their weaknesses, but just because of their weaknesses. They knew that they were in the hands of One mightier and more far-seeing than themselves.

3. The temper of the age is critical. A vast number of people have not made up their minds about religion; they remain uncommitted. They are almost contemptuous of atheism or any positive negation of Christianity, but they have never really yielded themselves up to something conceived of as a Divine message, coherent, authoritative, a message from God in response to human needs, satisfying and liberating. We cannot alter the temper of the age. But we who feel the meaning and nature of religion and seek to hand on the Word of God as a message from above, can fulfil this function. We can concentrate and strengthen the believing body. Because the stronger, the more real and hopeful the body which looks forward through all times of judgment, and maintains the bridge between the past and that which is to be, 'turning the heart of the fathers towards the children, and the heart of the children towards their fathers,' the less the perils of revolt, the greater the hope of the future which is to dawn. There is nothing which is more worth doing than to concentrate or bring together all those who feel that only in Christ, who is the culmination of the Bible, is the world's salvation; and that this message is for all nations and for all generations. Let us speak with a clear voice and believe it is our business to declare everywhere that the word of the message, even the Word of God, effectually worketh in all who believe and put it to the proof.

Fall and Recovery

1 Thess. ii. 16.—'To the uttermost.'
Heb. vii. 25.—'To the uttermost.'

The phrases, in the Greek, are similar; in the English, identical; but what a world of contrast there is between their respective contexts! The one, practically a sentence of national death, the other a promise of individual life. Nor let us forget that both the 'uttermost' of wrath, and the 'uttermost' of salvation belong to the Jews. We are often content to remember that it is they to whom St Paul refers when he says that 'wrath is come upon them to the uttermost': but how few of us habitually realize that in the words, 'He is able to save them to the uttermost,' the primary thought is of the Jew also? We do not forget that the dregs of the cup of bitterness have been drunk by God's ancient folk, but do we always recollect that the brimming chalice of life held by the

Saviour's hands is meant also for that same people? And the purpose of all missions to the Jews is, in brief, this—to alleviate the bitterness of the one cup by holding forth the sweetness and love of the other, that where sin overflows grace may much more overflow and judgment may be followed by mercy. So the twin texts guide our thoughts into these two directions.

1. *The Causes of Israel's Fall.*—What was it that finally filled the cup of Jewish misdoing to the brim? Not only the rejection of our Lord as the Messiah, deep as the guilt of so great a sin must have been. But St Paul appears quite clearly here to indicate that it was something further; it was their anti-missionary spirit that finally filled that cup to overflowing. They had themselves refused to enter nationally into the door of God's blessing, but when they stood across that door and would fain have barred the way to all the heathen world whom God was ushering into their place, then was the verdict of their doom they 'fill up their sins always and the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.'

And yet it might have been so easily avoided. Their Old Testament prophets had spoken to them, again and again, in the plainest terms of the world-wide evangelization which it was to be their privilege as a nation to fulfil. Their land stands at the junction of the three great continents of past history, and the highway of the nations passed, so to speak, in front of their very door.

One would have deemed that the great plan of God might well have been grasped by the nation that met with opportunities such as these. But the heart of the people never warmed to the ideal. The Jew hated the outsider and the outsider felt it. Tacitus speaks of the 'sullen and inveterate hatred' of the Jew to his fellow-men. Diodorus in stronger terms says, 'the Jew, of all nations in the world, is impossible as a friend.' And the pity of it was that the nation's refusal came just when the doors of the world were opened most widely. It was the fulness of God's time, when the hungering and thirsting peoples were waiting to be satisfied, and the Jew left to a handful of Apostles that which ought to have been a national enterprise. The Church went forward, but the Jew held back.

2. *The Consequences of Israel's Fall.*—The result has been written large over the world's history. We may see it now in several directions—not least in the nemesis which has fallen upon their anti-missionary attitude. For, while the Jew of a bygone time would not give the gospel to the Gentile, nine-tenths of the Christians of to-day care little and do less for the evangelization of the Jew. In temporal affairs the hatred of the Jew towards the world rebounded in a series of decimating conflicts, which left the nation a wreck although the people survived. The history of Europe has been anti-Semitic with scarcely a break all down the ages. Mediæval times are of course proverbial for the cruelty of their attitude. But in our own lifetime, untold atrocities have been carried on unchecked in nations which are professedly Christian by men who obviously are not.

Face loved of little children long ago,
Head hated of the priests and rulers then,
. . . . .
Say, was not this thy Passion, to foreknow
In death's worst hour the works of Christian men?

Not merely has physical suffering pressed hard upon the nation but, as they themselves can testify, spiritual paralysis and numbness have been among the most alarming features of their later history. T. R. Glover, in his book, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, has written these words, based on a conversation with a Jewish friend: 'To this day it is confessedly the weakness of Judaism that it offers no impulse, and knows no enthusiasm for self-sacrificing love, where the interests of the tribe are not concerned.' 'To the uttermost.' How much the 'elder brother' lost when he refused to enter in!

3. *The Recovery of Israel.*—'He is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

Robert Browning puts into the mouth of his dying Jew

God spoke, and gave us the word to keep,
Bade never fold the hands nor sleep
'Mid a faithless world,—at watch and ward,
Till Christ at the end relieve our guard.
By His servant Moses the watch was set:
Though near upon cock-crow, we keep it yet.

But the Master has come and called, and as yet the nation has disregarded His voice. And so we are inevitably brought from the fulness and freeness of *God's offer* to the very practical point of *man's obligation*. It is not always realized even by professing Christian people. 'Why this concern about the evangelization of the Jew?' Jews are not given to persuade Gentiles to embrace Judaism; why then should Gentiles pursue Jews with argument and appeal? The Christian propaganda is in its twentieth century, and the Jewish race still exhibits no sign whatever of a general acceptance of Christianity.

Those words would probably be endorsed by four-fifths of the business men who worship in our churches. The Church has need to be converted to God's purpose for the evangelization of the Jew. Why are we so concerned about this people? Because the Jew holds the I.O.U. of the Church of to-day. To the world he has held it financially for years, but he is the heaviest human creditor the Church of Christ has. What value do we set upon our Saviour Jesus Christ? The Jews gave Him to us 'according to the flesh.' Have we paid our account to the Jew for this unspeakable gift?

What does the Bible mean to us in the beauty of its ethics, the height of its ideals, the principles of its worship, the fidelity of its promises, the food of its words? Have we paid for the Living Bread on which we feed? What are our thoughts as we remember the first missionaries who came to bring the gospel? Read the thirteenth chapter of the Acts, and see how the men of Antioch decided to give their best for the conversion of the Gentile world—Paul and Barnabas, both Jews. Read the sixteenth chapter of the Acts and see how God led them past closed doors to the one open door, and brought them across into Europe. Carlyle in his *Frederick the Great* tells how George the Pious, Duke of Liegnitz, in 1584, erected beside a highway he had made a pillar with these words inscribed upon it:

Others have made roads for us: we make them
for still others:
Christ made a road to the stars for us all.

What value have we attached to our Master's command, that 'repentance and remission of sins should be preached unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem?' Search in the Acts of the Apostles and see how, in opening work in ten cities, the invariable principle, 'to the Jew first,' was observed. Then, as we think of the extent of our unpaid debt, ponder over the interest and the compound interest which has accumulated during the centuries of the Church's lassitude and worse! Shall we to-day lay afresh upon our own hearts, as we would fain lay upon the heart of the Christian Church, the fact that the Jews hold our bond for a larger amount than we can ever hope to pay? And yet is it not time we set about the discharge of it?

In the Master's old-time story which stands in the Gospel of St. Luke, the wounded Jew awoke to find the Samaritan, of half-Gentile blood, bending over him in aid. Shall we rouse ourselves not merely to a thoughtful interest in his present, but to a practical consideration for his future, that we may bring him within the Church where we ourselves have been tended, and feed him as we have been fed, with spiritual food?

¶ Israel Zangwill, the great Jewish leader, was called by his people the Voice of Israel. Among his many writings is a poem entitled 'Blind Children,' which is indeed prophetic of his own race. In it he describes the contentment of blind boys and girls, happy at their play, with no knowledge in their blindness of the world's true beauty. As if, in a spirit of understanding and comradeship, he asks:

How would they know or feel
They are in darkness?

And then, as he visualizes the wonder of possible sight coming to them, he exclaims:

But—O the miracle!
If a Redeemer came,
Laid finger on their eyes—
One touch, and what a world
Newborn in loveliness!
Spaces of green and sky,
Hulls of white cloud adrift,
Ivy-grown cottage walls,
Shining loved faces,
What a dark world—who knows?
Ours to inhabit is!
One touch, and what a strange
Glory might burst on us.
What a hid universe![1]

[1] F. E. Marsh, *Illustrated Bible Studies*, 118.

We Gentile Christians reiterate our belief in that great day on which Jewish evangelization shall give place to Jewish conversion, when the Master shall return, and the nation shall see Him whom they pierced, when those who have so long been obdurate shall bend in tears of agony before Him, and the Jew, restored to his glory, shall go forth throughout the world as the active emissary of the King of kings, to bring the unconverted nations of the world into the glory and honour of the heavenly city.

Comfort Concerning our Faith

1 Thess. iii. 2.—'And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith.'

It may be asked, Why does anyone require to be comforted concerning his faith? Is not faith itself the comfort?

Evidently even in the most radiant days of faith, when the very presence of Christ in bodily form was still hovering about the Early Church, there was need for this that the Apostle speaks of as comforting people concerning their faith. However else we define it, faith is standing or falling by the noblest hypothesis, and again and again those who have that high loyalty require to be comforted.

St Paul tells us that he sent Timothy to the Thessalonians to comfort them concerning their faith. But Timothy himself was very much in need of comfort, and St Paul in his own way had comforted him. There is no man so competent to comfort others as one who has known what it is to need comfort.

1. How had St Paul comforted Timothy? In the Epistle to Timothy it appears that Timothy was having a bad time. He had been sent by the Apostle to a difficult field, and he had written to St Paul telling him that he was finding things hard, and wondering whether he was the man for that particular place.

How did the Apostle reply to him? He might have said, 'I am sorry I cannot do anything to help you, but I sympathize with you.' There are those who consider that that is Christianity: a kind of reckless sympathy, and nothing more. But one feels that Christianity intends something more, and Paul says more. He says, 'Endure hardness,' or, more accurately translated, 'Take thou thy share of hardness, like a good soldier of Christ.' It is as if he had said, 'What did you join the movement for? Who led you to anticipate that the Christianity of the Lord is a soft and easy thing?'

¶ The tendency of our time to provide escape from struggle, to resent difficulties, or to offer a soft and tender sympathy to those who have burdens to bear is disastrous. The truest sympathy is shown by those who awaken courage and fortitude and determination to press on. The young are more daring and more enduring than their elders often know, and even the weak take delight in sacrifice. In nothing else does Christ's knowledge of the human heart come out more clearly than in His frank appeal for endurance.[1]

St Paul, having thus administered the medicine to this young man lest he be discouraged, immediately sends Timothy to Thessalonica to comfort the Thessalonians. Timothy may have told them in an informal manner how Paul had comforted him. So he told them to take a new hold on themselves, to take their share of the hard things and not to be discouraged by troubles.

2. When we speak of 'comforting' we rather tend to mean 'consoling,' helping people to see through something, or beyond something, so that they may accept it without bitterness. But to 'comfort' means something wider. By its derivation it means to strengthen, to make another strong with our strength, to share our strength along with another, we at the moment having a *plus* quantity, the other at the moment having less than the occasion requires. Or, to comfort another might mean to make another strong by taking his thoughts away from the immediate thing, and reminding him of other things—for example, of the friends that he still has, of the happy years that he has had, or of the happy years that may yet be in store for him.

St Paul used a Greek word, *parakaleo*. Parakaleo is composed of *kaleo*, to call, and *para*, aside. To comfort a person is to draw him aside, to call him closer and whisper to him something that he is neglecting.

The human soul is helped out of its sorest moods, not so much by dealing with those

[1] George Steven.

moods directly, as by calling up something else, something different, thus taking the pressure from the sore place and allowing the forces of life within us to come into play. There is, of course, a stage at which we ought to look firmly into the very eyes of the thing which has cast us into gloom, or has made us afraid. But there is a point at which we ought to stop thinking of the very thing which is troubling us.

¶ Dr Chalmers has a famous sermon, with the title 'The Expulsive Power of a New Affection.' He tells us how he got the title. A farmer member of his was giving him a lift to a market town in his trap. At a certain point on the road, the farmer gave the whip to the horse. The minister was surprised, thought it unnecessary, and said so. 'Well,' said the farmer, 'for some unaccountable reason or other this horse shies whenever we come to this part of the road, so I give him something else to think about.' There and then Dr Chalmers got his title—something else to think about, one thing to counteract the other; and he transferred it from the cut of the whip to the love that shames a man by an unexpected forgiveness, meeting evil with a counter good, the expulsive power of a new affection.

An hour comes when the best way to deal with ourselves is—having thought ourselves to a standstill, having worn ourselves weary with the imagination of grief or fear—to lift up our head and to look round about us, to see if there is not one who needs us.

It is the mark of a fine courtesy to know, in our approach to one who is suffering, when to speak of the thing that is in both hearts, and when to speak of anything but that thing. All that we need to be sure of is the sincerity of our intention. If we really mean love and friendliness and sympathy, we shall be able easily to read the signs; and whether we speak or are silent, we shall not be misunderstood, and we shall not have failed.

3. In the ministry of comfort atmosphere is everything. When we are truly suffering we are abnormally sensitive. Any unreality in the attitude of those who approach us betrays itself. But by virtue of the same sensitiveness we can appreciate reality and sincerity, even if the words which are employed are poor and difficult and common. We feel the goodness of heart.

St Paul was sure of his ground. He had a great love for the people he wished to comfort. He knew what they were suffering, for he had suffered the same, and 'a fellow-feeling makes one wond'rous kind' and strong as well.

¶ 'Some years ago,' writes the Rev. Joseph Pickthall, 'I went to one of the most famous King's Counsel in the land to ask him to act for the defence of a woman, a member of my church, who was to be tried at the Old Bailey on a grave charge. He was a busy man, and the remuneration that I could offer him was insignificant. I had little hope of persuading him to take up the case. To my astonishment he readily agreed to do so. After the woman had been acquitted, he told me why he had done so. The same tragedy that had befallen this woman had almost befallen one who was dear to him. He had faced the same shadow, and therefore he was able to help.'

As the Thessalonians read the letter to them, they felt that they were not alone, and when we feel that we are not alone the worst is past. There is a deep saying of Bunyan's. 'I perceive,' he says in his *Grace Abounding*, 'that it is the master-stroke of the Evil One to set a man a-thinking of his sins.' That is to say, it is a great stroke of the Evil One to cut off a man from his friends, insinuating that if they only knew him as well as he knows himself they would shrink back from him. Bunyan rightly holds that the bitterness of life is its loneliness. Now that which is true of moral loneliness is true also of the loneliness into which grief is apt to cast us. The bitterness of a great sorrow is unlike the bitterness of a great transgression in many aspects, but in this they are at one; in each case it is the loneliness that makes the bitterness. So one might amend this insight of Bunyan's and say: 'It is the master-stroke of the Evil One, whose function it is to depress and dishearten the human soul, to set those who are called to great suffering a-thinking of their loneliness.' And the counter-stroke which Jesus dealt the enemy of our souls was to assure the children of men that they were never alone, and least of all were they alone in the faithful endurance of hardness or grief or pain.

All suffering is lonely—we may be
  Surrounded by a host of friends who would
Reach out with eagerness to minister
  Within our solitude.

But oh, no human hand can touch the heart:
  Our dearest friend is stranger to our need;
In utter loneliness we stand apart,
  Uncomforted, indeed.

If it were not for One whose heart has known
  The loneliest roads, the bitterest agony;
Whose friends slept soundly as He prayed alone
  In dark Gethsemane;

Who climbed a lonely hill one April day
  That we, through lonely hours might touch
    His hands,
To find we are companioned in the dark
  By One who understands.[1]

4. It was 'to comfort them concerning their faith' that St Paul confesses he wrote his letters to the Thessalonians. They were suffering hard, actual sufferings, the loss of their husbands and wives and children probably, in the persecution under Nero. And what St Paul is anxious about is one thing, namely, that they shall not lose their faith because of their afflictions. His concern is that they shall not become bitter or cynical. And so he writes on and on, as he puts it, 'to comfort them concerning their faith.'

You know, he says with a startling simplicity, that we are appointed to such sufferings. That is to say, we who stand committed to a great cause, who stand for the high way of conceiving life, know that we must suffer. In a world in which Neros are still in power good people must suffer. Then his words become tender again. Lightly, hastily, as though he were afraid to relax their spiritual vigour by any too fond prospect, he tells them that he hopes one day to see them again—leaving it to themselves to consider how they will feel if he should come and find that in the interval they had fallen away from the greatness of their souls.

There is a beautiful Old Testament story of how a black spirit used to settle down upon the mind of Saul, the first king of Israel; and how, as often as the black spirit threatened him, the servants of the king would send for David; and how, as David, with his youth, his unspoiled freshness and his faith, played on the harp before the king, the evil spirit would depart from him, even as a mist might lift from the sea.

'By grace are we saved, through faith.' That is, we are saved by the hearing of a certain heavenly music. And is it not this that Christ has done, and would go on doing until the end? Does Christ not affect us, and is He not qualified to affect us, as does great music, appealing to that possible greatness of our souls for the sake of which and for belief in which He died, and willingly died? 'Wherefore, let us comfort one another with these words.'

[1] Grace Noll Crowell in *The Christian Advocate*.

God's Will for Us

1 Thess. iv. 3.—'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.'

Life at once begins to gain in content and volume, when it acquires a distinct point of view. To be aimless means to be resultless. As Thoreau remarks, 'In the long run, we hit only what we aim at.'

And so it is to our interest, even from the angle of policy in the matter of results, that we should have some ruling idea to aid us in a choice between things good and evil, and settle the wavering balance in things indifferent. Only as we insert a purpose into our days can we extract a purpose from them. In many ways the world just gives back what we put into it. We believe with Coleridge that 'To him that knoweth not the port to which he is bound, no wind can be favourable; neither can he who has not yet determined at what mark he is to shoot, direct his arrow aright.'

All this, of course, amounts to asking, 'What is the will of God for us?' If there *is* a will expressed in this world, aided and buttressed by the obvious laws of life, then it will be only common sense for us to lay our course in line with it.

In this Epistle Paul is led to make a practical definition of the will of God as he understood it. His earlier teaching about Christ's Second Coming had been much misinterpreted. His readers had misunderstood his application. Some argued that if Christ were to be expected on any day or at any hour, what good was there in working and slaving at ordinary toil? As a result, many unbalanced people broke away from the healthy restraint of work and duty. Thus disorder, spiritual and moral, spread through the young, undisciplined Church.

Paul might easily and justifiably have expressed his own disappointment and sorrow, but

forgetting self as much as a man can, he raised the whole question to the perfect plane of God. The test, he says, is 'What is the will of God?' 'Forget for the moment all about Christ's Coming, for after all that is in other hands than yours. Think of what God's will in the present would be, whether Christ came or not. Is not the will of God that you should live justly, quietly, soberly, and Godly? Think of the question as God's—this surely is the will of God, even your sanctification. Live in the light of that, under the inspiration of that, and all will be well, whether Christ come to-day or to-morrow, or never.'

1. The argument is that the highest expression of the will of God is that a man, by the leading and strengthening of the Holy Spirit, should gradually grow in likeness to Christ. That is the plain meaning of the word 'sanctification.' It expresses a progress towards an end, an increasing realization in our daily lives of personal perfection founded on Christ's. To become sanctified is the combined working of the spirit of God and ourselves towards the goodness of God in Christ. It is the purposeful development of Christian character along the lines of daily living. It is the resolve on our part that having given the heart, we shall seek to make the whole life follow. This, then, is the will of God for all men—even such sanctification as that.

¶ Said Henry Drummond: 'To become Christlike is the only thing in the whole world worth caring for; the thing before which every ambition of man is folly and all lower achievement vain.'

It might even be said that creation itself moves towards that. The end and function of this created world will be frustrated if men are not sanctified. Unless we are remade in Christ, unless His mind and nature become ours, in fine, unless we are *sanctified*, God's will is not done. The Bible's outlook is that the world was made for man, and man was made for God: man is the fulfilment of creation, and God is the fulfilment of man. God has willed many things but He has willed nothing just so much as this, that man should seek Him and find Him and become like Him.

The sanctification of man, his incorporation into the life of God, is the be-all and end-all of life as we know it. Were Nature never so beautiful, life never so perfect, justice never so established, reason never so accepted, and yet withal man not sanctified, the whole will of God would be frustrated. *We* are the will of God, *we* are the objects of His planning. It is the mainspring of all that God has done and all that God has been, that we should acknowledge Him by a sanctified life. This is the will of God, our sanctification.

2. How this great doctrine should deepen the responsibility of our living and link goodness to eternal foundations! In seeking goodness before all things, we are in agreement with the will of God. Evil in the last resort is the defeat of God's purposes, whereas an unselfish sanctified Christ-like life is the crown of all living. How the frank recognition of this should play upon our common desires and ambitions and pursuits!

There are two things upon which light is cast by this conception of sanctification.

(1) The first of these is Jesus Himself and His mission. A common criticism is that the means of salvation provided in Jesus is altogether out of proportion to the worth of mankind, that the Cross of Christ is a ridiculous extravagance on behalf of a few puny creatures in one of the smallest of the planets. If Jesus was the Son of God in any sense, then God took about the costliest means of effecting a very cheap end. Is it possible that God could narrow down His eternal will to such a paltry attempt? Can we and our affairs be of any intimate concern to Him whose power keeps the spheres in poise? 'What is man that thou art mindful of him?'

But it all comes from a wrong point of view. It arises from a confusion of the relative worth of all the spheres or universes possible with one tiny minute speck of conscious life. No thinker would say that there is anything greater than the human mind or the human soul. Pile star on star and universe on universe, and they would not weigh in the scale with one loving act of a loving heart. The fact is, we can't compare the two. They are on different planes. The one is spiritual, the other is material—and these two are infinitely apart. A speck of conscious life is worth millions of dead worlds. Man is the highest expression of the will of God, the one thing for which all others exist.

¶ Lord Samuel, in his book, *Belief in Action*, has this comment on the Psalmist's question: 'Not humility because our planet is but a speck of dust, and our bodies infinitesimal in relation

to the cosmic vastness, but rather a pride and an exaltation, that our minds transcend it—this may justly be our demeanour. "More wonderful than the heavens seen through a telescope is the eye and brain that sees them."'

But what to me is Alpha Gemini?
Why should I follow where the comets go?
The firmament of Mind is just as high,
And in its spaces brighter planets show
Than any the astronomer can know,
And secrets deeper than infinity.[1]

If God's will be our sanctification at all costs, we therefore see the natural place that the strange Cross of Christ holds between God and man. It is no longer something to be surprised at, for who can be surprised at love? It is just the outcome of God's passion to obtain that which He most desires, the sanctification of man. If we accept the evidence of our senses and the testimony of our spirits, we shall find it harder perhaps to disbelieve than to believe in the mission of Christ. If the will of God be human perfection and sanctification, ought He not even to have given Himself to effect it? God so willed and desired the sanctification of mankind that He gave Himself in Jesus, and Jesus is only God's natural attempt to work out the one thing that He willed.

(2) Again, this great doctrine of God's passion for our sanctification throws a needed light on something that is a source of common worry. Who has not been puzzled by the mishaps, the ups and downs, the waywardness, the mysteries of joy or sorrow of which life is so full? Again and again, the best of us are puzzled how to square facts with theories, how to find a place in our faith for the cruel bitter truths of actual living. Some of us preserve our equanimity by discreetly omitting to account for certain occurrences. We are not blind to the fact that things happen which we think should not, and in our puzzled anger we imagine that had we made the world, we should have made it on a different and better pattern.

Ah Love! could you and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of Things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire[2]

[1] Robert Bell, *To an Astronomer.*
[2] *Omar Khayyam.*

But, again, it all depends on the point of view. If all that was wanted in this world was peace, contentment, equality, or earthly happiness, it might have been easily obtained. But where the will of God was first and last man's sanctification, his progress in holiness and spiritual life, then the matter was put on a different footing. It is worth remembering that God's will was none of the things we think it should have been, but was purely a spiritual end, the evolving of tried, purified, tested, triumphant human souls. Life, with all its deplorable happenings, is so planned that there is no single thing which occurs that may not be turned into a means towards personal sanctification. Many of the things which we regret may be for us life's one great tonic, without which the soul would grow lax and limp. God wants man to grow a soul, and this is the best type of world in which it can be done. It may not be the best for happiness, but then, sanctification, not happiness, is God's will. It is enough for us to use the plain means to better ourselves, before attempting to better creation. It shall be a source of praise and not of blame if all the evils and sorrows of this world aid us on our halting march towards sanctification, which is *the* will of God for us all.

¶ 'The world is unintelligible,' wrote Dr Marcus Dods, 'except on the hypothesis that it is for our schooling, and that he who sows in tears is the likeliest to have sheaves worth gathering.'

Our sanctification and the will of God are one. We are false to God's purpose and our own destiny if we do not follow on to know Jesus. We fall short of life's aim and life's crown. It is a crown of which no one can rob us but ourselves. Let us therefore not defeat nor frustrate God's will for us; but by dying unto evil and living unto good, let us obey the will of God, even our sanctification, for beside that, nothing else counts.

Ambition to be Quiet

1 Thess. iv. 11.—'Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.'

The word 'study' may be translated 'be ambitious.' We associate ambition with intrigues and ruthlessness. We think of it as a

word that is often immersed in the blood of the innocents. For that reason we agree with Shakespeare when he says in *Henry VIII.*:

> I charge thee, fling away ambition:
> By that sin fell the angels.

But there are worthy ambitions—ambitions that ennoble the soul, and enrich the life with spiritual power; ambitions that would lift others as well as ourselves. It has been said that if you want to know a man's real life you must know what are his ambitions, what are the things he lives for, his motives and aims in life, the things that dominate him.

Be ambitious to be quiet and to work. Ambition usually concerns itself not with work, or the way of doing it, but with its results. Paul had quite another idea. His ambition was not so much for results as for the right spirit in work. His chief ambition was for quietness *in* his work.

1. In our age this is a difficult ambition. It was difficult to those people in the Thessalonian Church, but from a very different and, strange to say, a religious cause. There was a widespread belief that Christ would speedily return to earth—that this might happen at any moment; that His sign might any day appear in the heavens. This led to a restless feeling, to a neglect of daily work. There was a morbid kind of excitement in the Church, which made it difficult for men to be quiet and do their own work.

There is a like restlessness in our own age, but from a very different cause. The mechanical contrivances of our day have effected changes not only in the material realm, but indirectly in the spiritual realm. It may sound belated to argue against the spirit of an age which is rushing faster every year. Yet that fact only shows how sorely we need an antidote to the hurry that is in the world. And, after all, a society must stand condemned which has lost its leisure.

¶ 'The Hindus,' says Stanley Jones, 'worship the great god Hari (pronounced Hurry). The West also worships at the shrine of the great god Hurry! This is the god that dispenses fevers and strained hearts and unlovely lives, too busy to live.'

¶ 'If I had the power,' wrote John Foster, 'of touching a large part of mankind with a spell, it should be this short sentence: *Be quiet, be quiet.*'

Nothing great or serious or lasting can ever be done in a hurry. People rush to be rich, and gamble for the fortune which they will not wait to earn. But even they are hardly absurd enough to rush to be wise. They understand that learning, at least, cannot be gained at express speed. Education, if it deserves its name, must always be a slow, deliberate, gradual thing.

In religion, as in science and art, faith and hurry are mutually incompatible. The one must finally banish the other from the soul. The record of our Lord's life is full of strange, serene leisure. His Father's business was done for thirty quiet years at Nazareth. The Son of God served so long an apprenticeship of patience before His ministry began. And afterwards, when He became the vortex of eddying multitudes, He never showed a trace of hurry or excitement. Through all those crowded days of healing and controversy, He never knew what it was to be feverish or flurried or distraught. He moved like a king in His own realm, master of the pageant that stays for his pleasure. So Christ passed deliberately on to His appointed and accepted end. When Herod sought to kill Him, He could answer, 'I must go on My way to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following.' The Father had given Him His work to finish, and in that faith He made no haste.

¶ I once attended a farewell meeting tendered to a minister who, after a remarkably fruitful and prosperous pastorate extending over more than twenty years, was laying down his charge. The great hall was crowded; there was a sense of genuine sadness and poignant emotion in the temper of the meeting; the speakers vied with each other in sounding the good man's praises. I have forgotten all that they said. But I distinctly remember the utterance of a man who, towards the close of the meeting, craved the chairman's permission to add a single sentence. 'I have met Mr. Falkland nearly every day of my life for twenty years,' he said, 'and I have never yet seen him in a hurry!'[1]

2. It *may* be thus with us. But if it is to be so, we must be ambitious to be quiet. Such ambition will dislodge other ambitions. They

[1] F. W. Boreham, *The Uttermost Star*, 173.

cannot co-exist in the same heart. There can be no quiet in the heart if we are full of 'vaunting ambitions which o'erleap themselves.' These will render the ambition to be quiet impossible.

Let us indicate some of them.

(1) 'There will be no quiet for us' unless there be quietness of heart, an inward quiet and not just the quiet of circumstances free from din. No matter how humble a man's task may be, no matter how ordinary and uninteresting, he cannot set himself to do it faithfully without imprinting his very being on it; and if within the man there be no peace, but a surging of excitement or unrest, that inward tumult will tell on all his toil and subtly influence everything he does.

¶ It is one of the legends of our Saviour's childhood that in Joseph's workshop He was a perfect worker. If He made a plough, it was a faultless plough. If He made a toy, there was not a flaw in it. It is only a legend, and yet, like every legend, it leans for its secret of beauty on a truth, and the truth is that here was perfect peace, and perfect peace produced the perfect work.

Think, for example, of the disquiet of *despondency*; does not that tangle all that we put our hand to? There come to all of us, in spite of resolve and prayer, hours when the zest and charm of things depart. The slightest task weighs heavily upon us, and difficulties are magnified a thousandfold; things that yesterday we could have faced with ease seem to be insurmountable to-day; but it is not *things* which have changed, it is ourselves. We are grown nerveless in a deep disquiet; we cannot throw ourselves upon our task with joy, for we have lost the heart at leisure from itself.

(2) On the positive side one way to quietude of life is by means of *quietness in speech*. Speech re-acts on thought. A noisy way of talking excites the mind. The Apostle speaks of the tongue as a little member, but as set on fire of hell. The louder the utterance the greater the excitement. It is a habit among the Quakers never to raise the voice above a certain pitch. Something of their quietness of spirit is due to this. Differences of opinion would be robbed of half their bitterness if they were expressed in quiet tones.

Another way is by trying to *realize the relative importance of things*. Some things are not worth exciting ourselves about. Have we never been astonished, in looking over the records of our life, or of a church, or of the nation, at the smallness of many of the matters which caused the greatest excitement? As we look at them from a distance how trifling seem the matters which kindled so great a fire. Families have been rent asunder, churches disrupted, politics embittered, by things which at a little distance look utterly contemptible. If men could only have held such things up and calmly looked at them they would have felt them unworthy of so great excitement. Now, would it not be wise for us, as we see excitement rising about some trifling matter, to ask, Is this important enough to trouble ourselves about? Would it not be a waste of strength? Would it not bring needless vexation? And thus strength would be saved for the really important concerns of life.

Another way is hinted at in this passage—'do your own work,' or, as our familiar phrase renders it, '*mind your own business*.' Consider the situation that gave rise to such plain speaking. It is evident that there were some tattling people who were disturbing the peace of others. They did not work themselves, and what was even more serious, they made it difficult for others to do their work. Paul gave them timely advice. There are some people who dread nothing so much as being quiet. They delight in a row. They are full of suggestions for other people to carry out. Paul here says, 'Let it be your ambition to be quiet, and to get on with your own job.'

Yet another way to quietness is to be found in *work* itself. Our age is full of devices to get wealth without work. But they are all fraught with direst peril. They all bar the way to a quiet life, and in its place give men a restless, troubled career. Paul is referring not to what is known as 'Christian work' but to the daily business and occupations of life, in the discharge of which we reveal our Christianity and find a mind at peace.

Who drives the horses of the sun
  Shall lord it but a day;
Better the lowly deed were done,
  And kept the humble way.

The rust will find the sword of fame,
  The dust will hide the crown;
Ay, none shall nail so high his name
  Time will not tear it down.

The happiest heart that ever beat
Was in some quiet breast
That found the common daylight sweet,
And left to heaven the rest.

If the ambition to be quiet is in our heart, keep in the company of Jesus Christ. He will win us from false ambitions. He will show us that a 'man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth,' but in reality and simplicity of heart.

As to the present, we will be quiet, for we will be assured that 'all things work together for good to them that love God'; and as to the future, we will be quiet, for we will know that 'when the earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' And thus in quietness and confidence will be our strength.

Divine Medicine for Grief

1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.—'But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.'

THERE is a question very near the human heart which troubled the Thessalonians. 'How fares it with those who have fallen asleep?' And in this memorable utterance we are brought by the Apostle to a very simple and convincing answer which should dispel much anxiety.

1. For the first readers of this Epistle the question was mixed up with the belief in the immediate return of our Lord. They were therefore doubly perplexed not knowing what to think of the state of those who died before the Lord's return, and having no certainty as to the time of that return. It is plain then that this double perplexity added very much to the anxiety which filled their hearts when they thought of their departed friends.

There is a difference in our point of view to-day. The pressure of an immediate expectation of our Lord's return is not upon us, but there is an almost more intense longing for those who have gone before, and there is an even greater need for remembering the Apostolic counsel of hope.

But let us see first of all what exactly the Apostle means in his reply to the difficulties of the Thessalonian Christians. He is anxious that they should be fully informed. There is no reason why they should sorrow as those who did not share in the Christian hope. For as surely as the Christian belief is rooted in the death and resurrection of Jesus, even so is the confidence that God will bring along with the returning Jesus those who have fallen on sleep through Him. As to the return itself, what troubled them was the fear that those who had died would miss its blessedness, indeed that they might themselves pass away before seeing that day. That, he assured them, was entirely beside the question, for come Christ when He may, they who sleep in Christ are with Him and come with Him.

The important and permanent value of the passage lies for us in the explicit statement of the real ground of Christian hope. It is because of this that he deprecates their continued sorrow. With the Gentiles among whom they lived it was different, for they had no hope. For them the future was one long night of never-ending darkness. There remains indeed a pathetic letter of the great Roman orator dated from this same Thessalonica and bearing this note of despair. For such there was no refuge but sorrow. But for those whose faith was rooted in the death and resurrection of the historic Jesus, such hopeless sorrow was not only unwise but unworthy.

¶ Before Christ's coming the people of Tuscany, in Italy, made their tombs face the west, for death meant to them the close of life's day and the passing into eternal night. After Christ's coming the tombs faced the east, for Christ had brought life and immortality to light and turned the shadow of death into the glory of the morning.[1]

2. To us the language of the Apostle has its message of guidance and courage no less than for its first readers.

(1) It tells us that the revelation of the Christian Faith is the Divine medicine for grief. In Jesus Christ our Lord—in what He has done, in what He yet will do—there is an eternal fountain of comfort for bereaved hearts.

'If we believe that Jesus died and rose again'—the Christian consolation is dependent upon

[1] W. J. May, *The Promises of Jesus*, 31.

the Christian faith. To be without faith—not to hear a voice or trace a working in sorrow—there is its utmost desolation. The agnostic's dreary denial—no knowledge!—that is the very sting of grief. But the Christian faith is not the mere acceptance of a series of abstract propositions; it is a personal relation, a trust which grasps a hand and leans upon a heart; for if there is one thing beyond all else characteristic of Christianity, it is this intensely personal idea which everywhere informs and inspires it.

When in our sorrow we come in faith to Jesus—to Him, not to vague aspirations after immortality; to Him, not to shadowy ideals of hope; to Him, not to a heartless reasoning which would exhort us to raise ourselves by stern fidelity to logic above our griefs—then it is that we find that our God, 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' is 'the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.'

The Apostle here singles out two facts in the history of Jesus, and presents them to the mourner's faith.

The first of these is that 'Jesus died.' It is plainly suggested that in the fact that Jesus died there is a special consolation for those who sorrow for the dead, that Jesus tasted of all that life brings to us including its close, that the darkest tract of human experience is touched by His sympathy, that He is no stranger to the terrors of that mysterious land which one day we all must know. Death is not 'the undiscovered country' to Him, for in His manhood He has explored it for us that we should know no dread. Christ died, and therefore Christianity is at home with grief for the dead; and the first condition of an ample comfort is satisfied in the assurance that there is nothing He does not know concerning death.

The second fact is in the triumphant sequel. Jesus rose again. The meaning that we have found in the death of Jesus depends, after all, upon the glory which His Resurrection casts back upon His Cross. And since, indeed, He is risen, victorious over sin and death, for all who believe in Him what a calming is there of troubled fears!

He has changed the very idea of sorrow, because He has banished for ever the terrors of death, and brought into the heart of bereavement a hope, a sure and certain hope, pledged to us by Himself, who liveth to die no more.

(2) The Apostle also tells us in simple language of the state of the blessed dead and of the hope of reunion in Christ.

There is a beautiful passage in Chrysostom which brings out with singular force the distinction implied in St. Paul's use of words. You will notice that in the fourteenth verse Christ is spoken of as having *died* while His people are said to be *asleep*. As if it were meant that because Christ's death was a real death, 'a death of death,' His people's death has been turned into sleep. As Chrysostom says, since Christ came and died for the life of the world death is no longer called death but sleep. This thought of death took possession of the Christian mind and became laden with very tender and beautiful associations. Hardly any human words fall more sweetly upon the ear, softening the hard lines of dread separation than those which speak of the departed as those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. Yet it is no mere sentimental phrase but deep set in Christian teaching.

Nor does it imply any present loss of personal consciousness. To this life and to this world they have fallen asleep, but in another world and in another and a better life they live in God. What more would we have? They are hidden from our eyes but they live in God. And their life is more real than our own. ''Tis we who are moving in the shadows, 'tis they who dwell in light.' This is the state of the faithful departed.

She is not dead, the child of our affection,
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.[1]

3. But there is another thought which seems to be implied in the text. Shall we meet again in that better life with those whom we have loved and lost here? Is reunion beyond the veil a reasonable and sacred expectation?

There are many Scripture passages which suggest most pointedly how well grounded is the expectation. But behind all is the great fact indicated here that as the means of the present blessedness of the departed is Christ, so the means of our reunion with them will be Christ. Thus the Christian teaching as to the future of those who die in the faith and fear of God is at this point exceedingly simple. Falling

[1] Longfellow.

asleep in Jesus they live through Him in God, awaiting that day when He shall bring them with Him in the glory of the resurrection and living and dead alike shall live in Him. In short, Christ Himself is the pledge and assurance of our reunion. It is enough for those who trust in Him to say :

> My knowledge of that life is small ;
> The eye of faith is dim ;
> But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
> And I shall be with Him.

We may justly draw two practical inferences. (1) The duty of remembrance. There is a tendency all too common to let the dead pass entirely from our thoughts, to let them drift into mere oblivion. It cannot be too strongly asserted that this is rank paganism and not Christian in any sense. Christian it is not to mourn over the dead in hopeless despair, but to leave them in the merciful hands of God. Christian it is to remember with undying affection those who in the day of their earthly pilgrimage were dear to us as our own souls, who went hand in hand with us till God's finger touched them and they slept, who showed us the beauty of human life by patient endurance and quiet trust, who drew us even here nearer to God. Christian it is to think of them not lost in vague oblivion but living in God's light and peace, and drawing us still through unseen bonds nearer to God.

¶ It is an exquisite and beautiful thing in our nature, that when the heart is touched and softened by some tranquil happiness or affectionate feeling, the memory of the dead comes over it most powerfully and irresistibly. It would almost seem as though our better thoughts and sympathies were charms, in virtue of which the soul is enabled to hold some vague and mysterious intercourse with the spirits of those whom we dearly loved in life. Alas ! how often and how long may those patient angels hover above us, watching for the spell which is so seldom uttered, and so soon forgotten ! [1]

(2) But remembrance will never be real unless it be an impulse to action ; unless while we honour their memory we strive also to be followers of those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises. Thus the sacred mystery of the communion of saints may become a practical influence in our daily lives.

[1] Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews uses this fact as an argument to spur us on, to give us courage and perseverance in the fight against sin, the world, the devil, inasmuch as they who were once themselves engaged in this fight are now watching us with the keenest sympathy from the other world.

Let us therefore lay aside every weight. The life that rises even at times to the thought of the blessed dead will be prompted by an irresistible impulse to put aside all that is unworthy of that glorious vision. If there be that in our life which would pain them or put them to shame we must be done with it. We must ever keep before us this one aim : so to live here that by the grace of Christ we may be preserved from the evil, that with all the faithful departed we may at last attain eternal peace.

> Mourn not the holy dead, for Jesus calls them blest.
> They live in Him their living Head, in Him they love, they rest.
> Church of the Living God, refrain thy faithless tears ;
> Plead with fresh zeal the Precious Blood
> Until the Lord appears.

The Second Advent and Christian Character

1 Thess. v. 8.—'But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love ; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.'

THESE words are embedded in the memorable passage in the earliest of St Paul's Epistles where he instructs the Church in Thessalonica concerning the circumstances that will attend the Second Advent of our Lord, and the bearing of that solemn fact upon the present life. 'The day of the Lord,' says the Apostle, 'so cometh as a thief in the night.' To the mass of mankind it will arrive as a great surprise ; it is to be a cleaving of the ordinary course of events as sudden as the pangs of travail, and as unexpected as the midnight marauder. But not thus should it come upon the Church, prepared by the warnings and promises of her risen and ascended Lord. For her 'the day of the Lord' has been preceded by a day of revelation. Her members are 'sons of light.' And it is for them

to live in readiness for the breaking glory of that fuller dawn, which will usher in the eternal morning.

As St. Paul thinks of the faith and patience that should inspire the lives of all those who are thus expecting the return of Christ, there rises before his imagination the splendid figure of the Roman sentry, alert and watchful at the post of duty; and he sketches in bold, clear outlines the portrait of the Christian warrior. In him the Apostle sees the very image and embodiment of a life awake—sober, self-governed, equipped for conflict. 'We are not ignorant,' he says, 'of the issue of our waiting. Let us, therefore, gird ourselves for the struggle in which we must engage. Sober, as those who above all things must abstain from weak indulgence, and guarded from danger by the faith, love, and hope which protect with inviolable armour the mind and heart of him who possesses them—thus to be equipped is not only to be strong for battle; it is also to be spiritually prepared for the presence of Him whom we await.'

1. We are familiar with the taunt of unbelief that Christianity, by the importance which it attaches to the future life, causes men to neglect or to depreciate the life that is now present. The widespread influence of the teachings of asceticism in the Church at some periods of her history may give a faint colour of truth to the assertion. But here, at least, on the lips of the original preachers of the Second Advent is a decisive refutation of any such idea. The gospel of Christ opens up to man's hope the prospect of a future of transcendent glory, and leads him to set his heart upon it as the goal of his existence. But never for one moment does it ignore the living present, or allow him to attempt to cheat the realities which surround him, by indulging in golden dreams. Jesus Christ in His Ascension has lifted the veil from the Unseen, and has bidden us even now 'in heart and mind' to follow whither He has gone before. But He has done this, not that we should relinquish this world, and be compensated for its loss by the promise of a world which is better; but that life here and now should be transformed into the likeness of heaven—or, rather, that even now already the life of heaven should be begun. There is no single doctrine of Christianity which is not closely bound up with the present life. Jesus Christ confers upon His Church no spiritual privilege which is not indissolubly united in some form or another with earthly duty.

The truths of Revelation are not like lamps that burn in some great cathedral, serving to disclose the grandeur of the building itself, but shedding not a single gleam of radiance upon the outside world around it; but rather they are like the all-pervading sunshine, which penetrates into every nook and cranny of life, illuminating the dark alleys of the city with the same bright rays that glorify the summer fields and the mountain summits. Christianity reveals to us that this world and the next are truly one, and bids us live as if it were so, through the grace of light which has come to us from heaven itself; that we may both fulfil our vocation here and be ready to enter upon higher service there.

2. In the text the Apostle describes certain features of holiness which Christian people are expected to strive after in view of the Second Advent of our Lord.

(1) 'Let us who are of the day.' The Revised Version of the clause changes the simple statement of the Authorised Version, 'who are of the day' to '*since* we are of the day,' and thus more clearly expresses the idea of a motive which the Greek words certainly contain. Christian holiness is the character and practice of those who live in the broad daylight of a revelation which points forward to a fuller revelation yet to come.

'Since we are of the day.' It is an apt and beautiful description of holiness. The Christian life is in the sunshine of God, and basks in its warmth, and labours in its light. The brightness of an ample knowledge, the far distances of a large and open vision, the possibilities of noble and satisfying activity, freedom, purity, perfect reasonableness—these are the marks of holiness as it is to be attained in Him, whose own description of Himself is that He is 'the light of the world.' Nothing servile, nothing double-faced, nothing that flies to cover, can ever truly be 'of the day.' The uncertainties, the terrors, the hypocrisies of night—these are past with the darkness, and in their place have come the convictions, the peace, the sincerity which are the accompaniments of light.

(2) Then, next, holiness is sober: 'Since we are of the day, let us be sober.' Here in this

apostolic writing we are given indirectly a dark page from the history of sin, which tells of the ancient alliance between night and evil, and of the implacable enmity then, as now, existing between lust and light. To the Thessalonian Christian those dark hours, when his own self-indulgence was as that which he now saw going on around him, were to be only memories of guilt that had been cancelled by the Cross of his Redeemer. Never again was he to renew the old life, or to go back to follow that bidding of unrestrained passion which had been so pleasant to gratify under cover of night. 'Let us be sober': that is, temperate, self-governed, guarded from excess. This soberness implies a life which in every part of it is placed under discipline.

¶ 'Now,' said Christian, 'let me go hence.' 'Nay, stay,' said the Interpreter, 'till I have showed thee a little more, and after that thou shalt go on thy way.' So he took him by the hand again, and led him into a very dark room, where there sat a man in an iron cage. 'How camest thou into this condition?' asked Christian. 'I left off to watch and be sober,' answered the man, 'I laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts; I sinned against the light of the word and the goodness of God.' Then said the Interpreter to Christian, 'Let this man's misery be remembered by thee, and be an everlasting caution to thee.' 'Well,' said Christian, 'this is fearful! God help me to watch and be sober, and to pray that I may shun the cause of this man's misery.'[1]

(3) And, thirdly, holiness is spiritually equipped for the battle of life: 'Putting on the breastplate of faith and hope, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.' Is not the soldier—marching, fighting, or watching in the conscious fulfilment of duty—'of the day'? And is he not also sober as he is severely under discipline, and sober also as he is clear-eyed to see and to grapple with danger? But he is also equipped for battle. His armour is faith and love, and the hope of salvation. Faith, turning from self-dependence to personal reliance upon God in Christ; love, forsaking self-pleasing for the devotion of self-surrender in His service; hope, renouncing despair for the prospect of endless blessedness which is bound up with salvation through Him—these are the spiritual equipment of the warrior of Christ for his long war with evil.

[1] *The Pilgrim's Progress.*

These are the marks of all who seek to be prepared in heart and life for the coming of the Lord. Therefore let each of us reckon with himself, and try his ways, stirring up his heart within him, as if to say: 'Christ is coming. Let us be daily living worthy of Him, forming by His grace a character which is holy as He is holy—holy, harmless, and undefiled.'

Faith and Love their own Defence

1 Thess. v. 8.—'Putting on the breastplate of faith and love.'

Faith and love are here set side by side. In Paul's theology faith is always put against works. The theology of works against which Paul laboured in argument and controversy came to this, that according to Jewish ethic a man could work away at his own life and produce a pretty good record, and then bring it before God for approval. Paul's teaching was that the way to begin is to have life submitted to God. It is not what we can do by way of merit and achievement, but by surrender to God in faith. That is what is at the centre and heart of all Christian love and conduct, and that is faith, said Paul. It means love, because the God who remoulds our life, the God in whom we trust for forgiveness, is a God of love, and therefore that faith which responds to God, who thus forgives us, must be a faith which includes love, a trust that issues in the same spirit of affection and unselfishness.

Faith and love, says Paul, constitute the real safeguard of the Christian life in our contact with one another—'putting on the breastplate of faith and love.' To us faith and love may seem fragile things that need themselves to be safeguarded and protected. You have faith in your fellow-man, but you go out to a world where your illusions are often broken. You have love for your fellow-men, and you soon discover that the world is not a place of charity or brotherliness, that there is cruelty and selfishness rampant. Faith and love may seem to us to be just like air bubbles that will shatter upon the first touch of reality. Paul's claim is that they are not so. Faith and love are themselves the protection of life. The one way to keep the Christian life safe is to use faith and love, in spite of disconcerting experiences.

Practise them, Paul says. Put them into action, putting on the breastplate of faith and love!

¶ There is a group of realists abroad, among Christians as well as among pagans, who say: 'Do not expect too much of fellow-human beings. Do not believe in them too much, and then you will not be disappointed.' Our quarrel with these realists is not that they see life as it is—every one should do that—but rather that they lack imagination and the faith in human beings to see what they may become. Many a person living on a low plane must be loved into the Kingdom of God. He must be made to see that it makes a difference to someone if he goes to the devil. He must be shown that someone is willing to risk a broken spirit that he may live clean, and true, and honest. Of course, great believers are sorely disappointed. Jesus was the greatest believer in men, and was probably more keenly disappointed than any one else, but by His disappointment dull men were raised up to be saints and to carry the gospel to the then known world.[1]

1. The Christian must arm himself. There are some things which no one can do for another, and this is one of them. Creeds have their place and function, but it is notorious that behind the most elaborate and orthodox articles of a confession the spirit of personal Christianity may readily decline. The organization of the Church is a real aid to faith and love; none knew better than Paul the vital support and stimulus afforded by social fellowship to individual Christians. Nevertheless, the only faith which ultimately avails is the faith of personal convictions verified in experience and brought into action on the field of real life. The services of theology and institutions are not to be undervalued in the apology for the Christian faith, but their influence requires to be supplemented by the practical conduct of individual Christians, which, after all, is the most telling reason for the faith that is in us. Of theology and institutions in Christianity we may almost say what Cavour once said of political apologetic: 'To every one his work. The philosopher and the economist, in the seclusion of their studies, will confute the errors of Communism; but their labour will bear no fruit unless men practise the great principle of universal benevolence, and act upon the heart while science acts upon the intellect.' It is the personal and practical exercise of Christian faith and love which alone makes the efforts of a theoretic apology for our religion successful.

¶ Mrs Frederick Wood, in her book, *Living Above the Average*, writes: 'The world is mystified by our dogmas, but it can understand devotion. Love in action still makes its appeal. If we are to reach the heart of the materialistic world of our day, we must learn the secret of living the Christian life in ways that they can understand.'

2. Furthermore, the very organization of the Church, which enlarges our personal faith and affords a sphere for the love inspired by faith, may be almost as much of a trial as a help in certain cases. Membership of a church may reveal, as people come into close relations, some of the most irritating and petty traits in human nature. It often invigorates us with the stimulus of example and comradeship, but it as often discloses faults and foibles. It may—it frequently does—throw us into touch with people with whom it is extremely difficult to get on. They provoke us to lose temper and patience. They cool our generous hopes of men. There is a temptation to distrust or even to despise some of our fellow-Christians, when, like these believers at Thessalonica, we discover to our annoyance that our charity is being abused, our advice ignored, our motives unfairly judged, our forbearance taken advantage of by the unscrupulous, and our services received without much gratitude. This is where the danger of cynicism and selfishness lies in wait for us, with that heart-burning and resentment which are the very destruction of the soul. There is nothing for it but to meet such people steadily upon Christian terms. We must let our religion determine our estimate of the world and our attitude towards it. Nothing but love, after all, can keep love alive. It is only as we continue to work with people and for them, under the obligations of the Lord in whom we believe, that we can manage to ward off the deadly onset of suspicion and indifference.

3. To think and act with such unswerving generosity means courage of a high order. That is why love of this heroic, unflagging nature depends on faith, just as real faith in turn will

[1] George Stewart, *God and Pain*, 24.

not survive the collapse of love. The one is organic to the other. Whatever we do with them, we have to live by them. They are armour, not decorations, and any attempt to suspend or abate their influence over the real motives and interests of our life means a defeat and a retreat from our high calling. In this life of Christianity we are liable at any stage to encounter deadly wounds from scepticism and selfishness. The very enterprise and excellence of the faith exposes us with special force to some of these temptations. But should any of us imagine that Christian faith and love are fragile, delicate qualities, which require artificial protection from the outside if they are to survive contact with the rude world of men and things, it is because we are not venturing to put them bravely into action, and to see how much they can stand. Their practice is their best protection.

Salvation in Christ

1 Thess. v. 9.—'God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.'

1. What was the message which the first Christian preachers proclaimed? What was the gospel with which the apostles went forth to turn the world upside down, as they said at Thessalonica? What was the Good News which in Carlyle's vivid phrase 'flew like hallowed fire' all over the Roman Empire and at length by God's grace reached this little island of ours?

Was it perchance a new system of ethics bequeathed to men by some Galilean moralist called Jesus? No preaching of Christianity can ignore the ethical side of it, of course. But, alas, the most ideal goodness will never save this lost world. The moralist's rope is not long enough for sinful men and women. William Blake saw the point when he said: 'If Christianity was ethics, then Socrates was the Saviour.'

It was not the moral teaching, nor was it admiring imitation of the manhood of the Master, the moral beauty of His character, which the earliest preachers took as their theme. They did not say: 'Follow this Leader, cultivate His lovely virtues, pattern your lives upon His.' What then was the apostolic gospel? It was to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him. The first preachers were not strolling moralists. They were not peripatetic philosophers. They were heralds. And what they proclaimed was a Christ who had died for sin, who had risen from the dead, who was now regnant at God's right hand, and who had given the Holy Spirit to men. These were the saving facts on which they built their message of salvation.

2. But what is salvation? Salvation is *life*, life with the quality of eternity in it. The Christian salvation was a *new life with God* made possible and available by His saving love in Christ, a new life actually experienced here and now, a new life one day to be crowned and perfected in glory.

This life had three aspects. (1) It looked back to a mighty redeeming act of God in Christ. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God had 'visited and redeemed his people,' as the Scriptures had said He would. In the Cross the prophecy of Isaiah had been fulfilled. Jesus had broken down the barrier that separates sinful men from a holy God.

O love of God! O sin of man!
In this dread act your strength is tried,
And victory remains with love:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified!

But if the death of Christ had closed the old chapter of sin, the resurrection of Christ had opened the new chapter of holiness and life unto God.

(2) Salvation was also a present experience. The Good Time Coming of which seer and prophet had dreamed had now in part really come to pass. It was no longer a shining hope set on the far horizon; it was a present reality. The life that was life indeed, eternal life, was now theirs in Christ. God had already 'translated them out of the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son.' The old things had passed away: all things had become new.

Nor could anyone doubt that these men had received new life. A new power, a new courage, a new joy, a new hope was theirs. The 'failure of nerve'—that tragic sense of defeat and disillusionment which lay so heavy on the heart of the ancient world—had gone for them—had gone in Christ. No wonder these men of the New Testament, as Dr Gossip has put it, 'come bursting in with their faces shining and their

hearts afire, crying out, We have got it, we have got it!—the thing tired earth has been waiting for. We have got it, and we must share it with the world.'

(3) And salvation was also a future hope. Their present experience of salvation was but a foretaste, 'a sample and first instalment,' as Paul said, of what was yet to be. One day they would taste salvation in its fulness. 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.'

¶ 'The word "salvation,"' writes Dr James S. Stewart, 'is like the Cross that purchased it: it reaches up to heaven, and goes down to hell, and its arms embrace the world. For the past, it brings forgiveness; for the present, the power of the Spirit; and for the future, life for evermore.'

That is what salvation meant for the first Christians. And if we are to be true to the first gospel, that in essence is what the Christian faith should mean for us to-day.

This is the same world in which God once wrought decisively for our salvation in Jesus Christ. The Christ whom they worshipped is still our Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He still reigns to-day and all days in the hearts of those who love Him. Still He is to them a living and present Saviour. Still through Christ do men win that peace and blessedness that the world cannot give. And still like those first Christians we hold fast the unconquerable hope that one day God is going to make an end of evil, the forces of Satan are finally to be vanquished and God be all in all.

But dawn that day soon or late, we who believe in a living Christ know that we are bound, as with fetters of adamant, to our exalted Lord; we are persuaded that nothing in the world or out of it can separate us from the love of God; and we hope by the mercy of God one day to gain an inheritance among the saints in light.

The Life of Prayer

1 Thess. v. 17.—'Pray without ceasing.'

This seems an unreasonable requirement, an impossible achievement. Life is more than prayer. It is a ministry, and to every man there is appointed a work which he must do and which he dare not neglect. The Lord Jesus is our Exemplar, who spent eighteen years in a carpenter's shop at Nazareth, handling hammer and saw. And even during the days of His ministry He did much more than pray. He was indeed a man of prayer. It was His custom on the eve of every crisis, every fresh departure, to go apart and take counsel with God. But His seasons of prayer were only breathing-spaces in His strenuous life, and His days were spent, not in the offices of devotion, but in the ministries of teaching and healing.

And we too have our appointed tasks, and it is the will of God that we should perform them faithfully and diligently. Man must work as well as worship, and there is something amiss when either encroaches upon the other. Therefore it has been attempted to tone this precept down and make it to mean that we should pray often and earnestly. But the Apostle meant what he said, and, if we think about it, we shall see, not only that it is possible, but that there is in fact no other way of praying. Indeed, our difficulty is due to a narrow and imperfect conception of what prayer is. Too often we think of it as a formal exercise of devotion, kneeling to offer words of petition or thanksgiving; but it is much more than that. It is not merely, or necessarily, going apart from the din of things, and pouring out our hearts in worship. If it were that alone, of course, it would be impossible to pray without ceasing, else we should be able to do nothing else, and our prayer would be futile. But prayer is something higher, deeper, grander than praying.

1. Prayer is not only an act: it is an attitude. Take love, for instance. If we love at all, we love without ceasing. A mother never ceases to love her son. She is not always caressing him, nor is she thinking about him every hour of the day. But her love never tires, never tarries, never sleeps. If you find her in the midst of her employments, she will talk of many things; but just mention the name of her son, and her eyes grow soft, wistful, and tender at thought of him. Her heart is full, and a touch makes it overflow. That is her constant and characteristic attitude towards her son, always, everywhere. She may go apart and write a letter to her boy, but she does not have to retire to her room to think of him, much less to love him. Just so it is with prayer. If

we pray at all, we must pray without ceasing. As Elizabeth Browning said :

> In a mother undefiled,
> Prayer goeth on in sleep, as true
> And pauseless as the pulses do.

Prayer, then, is not simply an act, but a constant and characteristic attitude of reverence, of dependence, of thoughtful, aspiring life towards God. It was God who made us, not we ourselves, and we are every moment dependent upon Him, as a flower is dependent upon the sun from which it derives its life and colour. To recognize this fact, and order our lives accordingly, is prayer. When at its best, it is a constant, earnest desire of the mind, the heart, and the whole life towards Him.

¶ 'The life of prayer,' said St Teresa, 'is love to God and the custom of being ever with Him.'

¶ 'When,' says Erskine of Linlathen, 'we have learned to offer up every duty connected with our situation in life as a sacrifice to God, a settled employment becomes just a settled habit of prayer.'

The first sermon of Emerson had three points. Firstly, all men are always praying. Secondly, all prayers are answered without fail. Thirdly, be careful what you pray for, lest it come upon you and mean your undoing. Each point is as true as it is startling. The deep, dominating desire of a man is his prayer, for good or bad, underlying all particular petitions; and it works itself out by calling all the forces of being to its aid, and engaging for its furtherance every power within reach. Moral victory lies in teaching the deepest desires of our nature to serve the highest ends of life and character; making our unceasing prayer, the answer to which is inevitable, one with the will of God. Our characters are the sum of our answered prayers; they reveal to-day what we have been really asking, desiring, seeking in the days gone by.

2. Thus every man can measure himself by asking this question: What are, to me, the profoundest necessities of life? For the religion of a man is not what he professes, but what he lives out and acts upon from day to day. His life is his religion. If life itself be a prayer, no one should desire what he is unwilling to lay before God, and no one should pray for what he does not actually desire. What, then, is the office and value of the hour of prayer in the life of man? Perhaps it may be stated in this way. When the captain of a ship is setting out on a voyage he first of all adjusts his compasses, corrects their divergence, and counteracts the influences which draw the needle from the pole. Well, that is the office of the hour of prayer. It is the adjustment of the compass of the soul, the restoration of deflection, and the pointing of the will to the will of God. And the soul which thus sails forth on the sea of life will find itself, not indeed freed from all storms of the spirit, but at least sure of its direction through all storms. That is to say, the hour of prayer is a time when we test what our unceasing prayer is. And the test is this: Is it the reknitting of a severed bond or the recollection of an unbroken fellowship? Happy the man who at the end of the day can say, like Bengel, German scholar and saint, 'Lord, it is the same between us as when the day began.'[1]

So to pray without ceasing is to 'cultivate a frame of spirit that is habitually devotional,' having mind and heart attuned to God in all seasons and activities. And this is no depreciation of the offices of devotion. The spirit of prayer is created and fostered by frequent and deliberate approaches to the throne of grace. We need our still hours, our stated seasons of communion, morning by morning, evening by evening; but these are not enough. It would rid us of many a vexation and deliver us from many a temptation if, amid our toil and fret, we would ever and anon remember Jesus and tighten our grip upon Him, and lift our heads into Eternity.

The Sacrifice of Thanksgiving

1 Thess. v. 18.—'In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward' (R.V.).

One of the most impressive features of Paul's Epistles is the pre-eminent place given to thanksgiving. Paul is always thanking God for His unspeakable gift of the gospel, for his coworkers in the service of the gospel, for the fruits of the gospel in his converts, for the oppositions and sufferings he encountered in the furtherance of the gospel. Even in his most massive arguments in defence of the gospel, from time to time he halts his logic, and breaks

[1] J. Fort Newton in *The Christian World Pulpit*, xciv. 49.

into pure thanksgiving. The strain of his spirit furnishes the pattern in which all our lives should be cast.

1. To begin with, and in the most elementary sense, thanksgiving is *the recognition that is due from a dependent creature to a bountiful Creator.* For whether we acknowledge it or not, we are all pensioners on God's bounty. It is from Him we derive our being, well-being, and all the blessings of this life. Every rightly disposed person ought to feel an irrepressible urge to return thanks for this glorious heritage of life. Katherine Mansfield, a sojourner in Switzerland for her health's sake, an avowed unbeliever, yet as she drank in the tonic air of the mountains, and revelled in the loveliness of the woods, wrote to a friend, 'If only one could make some small grasshopper sound of praise to Someone—some thanks to Someone, but who?' The devout soul, with a clearer recognition of the source of all this largesse, feels constrained to give thanks to God Himself. 'Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.' Good, pleasant, comely, but also right and necessary. For there is no other fitting sacrifice we can offer Him. We cannot enrich His being by any gifts of ours. He already possesses all, and abounds. The one sacrifice which is ours to give, which God desires and which is pleasant in His sight is the offering of our grateful thanks.

¶ Epictetus, the most lovable of the Stoics, who comes nearest of them all to the Christian temper of faith, declared that praise was the proper business of man. 'What else can I, a lame old man, do but sing hymns to God? Nay, if I were a nightingale, I had done the work of a nightingale; if a swan, the work of a swan. So being what I am, a rational creature, I must sing hymns to God. This is my task, and I perform it, nor will I ever desert this post, so far as it is vouchsafed me, and you I exhort to join in this same song.'

2. We ought further to observe the vital way in which *thanksgiving affects the life of prayer.* It is the soil in which the seeds of prayer germinate and grow. It is significant that the exhortation given here to 'pray without ceasing' is flanked on the one side by the command to 'rejoice evermore' and on the other 'in everything to give thanks.' Those are the two wings on which prayer mounts to God. Halyburton, the Scottish saint, prescribes thankfulness as a specific for dryness of soul. He himself was frequently gravelled by his low spirits and disinclination to prayer. In his *Memoirs* he writes: 'I find a law that always, even when in the lowest depths, I can pull myself back into the sunshine through the duty of thankfulness.' But not only does it dispose us rightly towards God, but it also vitalizes every exercise of prayer. It enriches pure adoration to God by putting positive content into this act of prayer. It makes our confession more poignant and realistic, because to sin against a love which should evoke only gratitude makes our sin infinitely more heinous. It also encourages petition, since we acquire boldness in the presence of one whom we have found in experience to be a giving God. It also aligns us with all our fellow-beings, because the gifts which call forth our gratitude are seen to be not our personal preserve, but the intention of God for all His creatures. That is why we find that in the New Testament thanksgiving and intercession are joined together. 'I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.' In ways like these, thanksgiving is seen to be the oxygen of prayer, quickening and enlivening all its parts, giving point to Paul's exhortation, 'Maintain your zest for prayer by thanksgiving.'

3. Once again the prayer of thanksgiving *possesses the virtue of giving us the victory over the disabilities of life.* 'In everything give thanks,' is the counsel of Paul to a persecuted and suffering Church. And that 'everything' includes impoverishments as well as enrichments, shadow as well as light. This is a severe test of character, and only those who possess a faith which thankfully accepts all that comes to them as the will of God can meet it. That is why Paul adds the interpreting clause, 'This is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward,' or, as Ronald Knox translates it, 'This is what God expects of you as Christians.'

I praise Thee while my days go on;
I love Thee while my days go on:
Through dark and dearth, through fire and frost,
With emptied arms and treasure lost,
I thank Thee while my days go on.[1]

[1] E. B. Browning, *De Profundis.*

Montaigne expresses his astonishment at the hilarious reactions of the saints to the miseries of life, and adds that, for himself, they only make him curse. Paul shows us the more excellent way. He himself illustrated the counsel he enforced on others. He mastered the secret of giving God thanks in everything. To be sure, he had his reasons for this gallant response to life's contradictions. There was not a bitter cross he had to bear but carried in its heart some compensating gain. Was he a prisoner in bonds, then his bonds turned out rather to the furtherance of the gospel. Was he broken-hearted at the moral failure of the Corinthian Church, that broken-heartedness invited the rich comfort of Christ, which, when received, made him the distributor of a like comfort to others. Did his plans go awry, his programme become disarranged, and his hopes blighted, he still rejoiced in the assurance that 'all things work together for good to them that love God.' Even if the weight of his sufferings became intolerable he reflected that at their worst they were merely transitory, 'not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' A spirit like this that thanks God even for defeat is beyond the reach of defeat. It turns the flank of every opposing force, converts enemies into allies, and leads captivity captive.

Do we possess a faith like this, which produces a spirit of thankfulness under the most depressing circumstances? Trench reminds us that there are some who murmur when in a blue sky one speck of cloud appears. But there are others whose hearts are filled with thankful love if 'but one streak of light, one ray of God's mercy, gilds the darkness of the night.' These are the excellent in all the earth, who have caught the infection of Christ's spirit and that of His great Apostle.

¶ When the great Bishop Westcott was dying he was heard to remark, 'All I can do is a little bit of praise'; and, he added, 'Just a bit of praise.'

4. Finally, and above and beyond all other causes for thankfulness, is *the contemplation of the overflowing goodness of God in the gift of His Son to the human race.* This is 'the topmost, ineffablest crown' of all God's gifts, in which all others are included. It is the sense of the surpassing value of this gift which fills the New Testament with light and radiance. There is a marked difference between the Old and the New Testament in feeling and outlook. The music of the Old Testament is often set in the minor key. Its song comes fluttering and uncertain. The hearts of its writers are dashed with fears as well as hopes. But the New Testament is set in the major key from beginning to end. Its heroes sing songs at midnight in the innermost prison. They have their problems, but they are certain they have the key to their solution in their hands. Sin abounds, but grace much more abounds. Death reigns, but it is swallowed up of life. All the closed roads to God lie wide open, and before them gleams a light 'that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' It is Jesus who has made all this difference, and the sense of His preciousness fills the souls of His adoring followers with a rapture of thankfulness.

'In everything give thanks.' Let us begin with something, anything, for which we can sincerely praise God, for if we never thank God for anything in particular we shall never learn to thank Him in everything. And as Christians let us in particular thank God for the gift of His Son, for what He has done, is now doing, and will continue to do for us, in us, and through us.

¶ Look into Jesus' eyes. Listen to His voice. Take a walk round by Calvary. Remember the crown of thorns. Then tell yourself (for it is true), 'All this was for me! The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me.' And see if you do not begin to feel like Charles Kingsley when he wrote to a friend, 'Must we not thank, and thank, and thank for ever, and toil and toil for ever for Him?'[1]

Wherefore I crie, and crie again;
And in no quiet canst thou be,
Till I a thankfull heart obtain
Of thee.

Not thankfull, when it pleaseth me;
As if thy blessings had spare dayes:
But such a heart, whose pulse may be
Thy praise.[2]

[1] J. S. Stewart, *The Gates of New Life*, 185.
[2] George Herbert.

Sympathetic Criticism

1 Thess. v. 19–21.—'Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'

The first beginnings of any movement are always fraught with great possibilities in either direction; when all are swept along in a flood-tide of enthusiasm, when plans are conceived and foundations laid for the developments of the future. It was such a time in the history of the Early Christian Church at Thessalonica to which the missionary apostle sent his Epistles to the Thessalonians. These two brief writings are most revealing as throwing floods of light on the actual life-situation of typical new Christian churches of the first century. They are intensely human writings. There were discords and party division, an occasional instance of unseemly conduct, tendencies to idleness in anticipation of the looked-for return of Christ and the coming end of the age. The situation was not ideal. But it had the redeeming merit of spontaneity, sincerity, and a certain ebullient quality such as the Church was never able to recapture when once the congealing process had set in. They were spirit-filled groups in whom the domination of the Spirit was all-pervasive. It occasionally led to excesses of enthusiasm. But the wise Apostle recognized that the dangers of excessive enthusiasm were less than the perils incidental to an attitude of conventional luke-warmness. Hence his counsel to the Thessalonian Church: 'Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings.' He was supremely concerned with the preservation of the life of the Spirit; above all else he desired that it should not be stifled.

1. St. Paul's phrase—'Quench not the Spirit'—carries a notable suggestion. These vehement motions are as the flames, which leap upwards in wild freedom while fuel and air are given. They are flames kindled from no earthly hearth, but from the altar of heaven.

When we endeavour to find some counterpart in our own experience to these extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, perhaps we may accept some such version of St Paul's language as this: 'Do not be too hasty to stamp out what is novel and alarming, lest you suppress the free movement of genius, and disallow the unconventional methods of enthusiasm.' There is an element of Divine power in genius and enthusiasm, and it is not fitting that men who believe in an inspiring Holy Spirit, ruling in the affairs of men and wondrously guiding His chosen instruments towards the ends of His providence, should be eager to stamp out movements which may be the effects of His presence.

When writing to the Church in Rome, Paul, though he did not exhort them 'Quench not the Spirit,' yet put the command positively, 'Be fervent in spirit'—after the example of Apollos. Put quite literally, this command would read 'boiling in spirit,' suggesting that as the fire under the vessel causes the water in it to boil, so the Spirit burning within the believer's heart should heat his powers to ardour and enthusiasm. 'Where the Spirit is He burns.'

¶ 'Every one knows that a fire smokes most when it is newly kindled; but the way to get rid of the smoke is not to pour cold water on the fire, but to let it burn itself clear. If you are wise enough you may even help it to burn itself clear by rearranging the materials, or securing a better draught; but the wisest thing most people can do when the fire has got hold is to let it alone; and that is also the wise course for most when they meet with a disciple whose zeal burns like fire.[1]

2. St Paul passes to another and different manifestation of the Spirit. '*Despise not prophesyings.*' In the Epistle to the Corinthians we find a striking comparison instituted by the Apostle between the '*gift of tongues*' and the '*gift of prophecy.*' The one is private, enriching the spiritual life of the individual Christian; the other is public, bringing advantage to the whole assembly of Christians. 'He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself: but he that prophesieth edifieth the Church.'

If we may paraphrase the Apostle's language, his counsel would run somewhat thus: 'Take care that, in the enthusiasm of a religious movement, you do not despise and depress the intellectual activity of the Church. At the moment, indeed, zeal and eloquence may seem to carry all before them, and there needs nothing more than the 'multitude of preachers' and the fervour of crowded assemblies to conquer the

[1] James Denney.

world, but churches cannot really afford to despise intelligence and to neglect learning. The 'understanding' has its place in the religion of Christ, as well as the emotions, though these are not to be crushed, and the imagination, though this is not to be disallowed.

'Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings'—the two commands should not be disconnected by full stops as in the A.V., and need not be separated by semi-colons as in the R.V.; commas would better mark the relation they bear to each other. Dr Findlay thus punctuates and comments: '"Quench not the Spirit," despise not prophesyings; but test everything.' From this carefully balanced warning we gather that the false fire mingled with the true caused the more sceptical minds in the Pauline churches to distrust prophetic gifts, while the ardent and credulous fell into the opposite mistake—the uncritical acceptance of anything that looked like prophecy.

As the Apostle declares, the right way to handle all religious phenomena is not to quench but to test, to bring our own mind to bear on whatsoever we are asked to approve, to take nothing at its own valuation but to give a fresh and deliberate application of intelligence to the problems of Christian duty. '*Prove or test all things.*'

And this deliberate, responsible, free exertion of our own private judgment must always be conditioned by two broad considerations. On the one hand, we must distinguish, disentangle, and refuse to abandon the sound core (if there be any) of every movement and every proposal which claims our support. On the other hand, we must be quite relentless against any tampering with Christian principles, and set our face as a rock against any course, however seemingly expedient, which we can clearly see is at bottom morally indefensible. 'Hold fast that which is good.'

3. Such, then, is the advice which St Paul gives to the Thessalonians at a time of great perplexity, when 'the fountains of the great deep were being broken up,' and the most blessed and permanent of all reformations was beginning to make its presence felt among men. It may not be thought extravagant if we claim for our own age some striking similarity with the age which witnessed the first preaching of the gospel.

Both in the ancient and in the modern world 'the powers of heaven are shaken,' and men are restless and perplexed, looking for some better solution of the problems of human life than any that the established institutions and hereditary wisdom of society can offer. Both then and now 'the Spirit of God moves on the face of the waters,' and the tokens of His motion are visible in many directions. Ideas are visiting men's minds; change is in the air; movements, religious, and social, are many and perplexing.

To be sympathetic with new ideas, to be just to new movements, and yet never to underrate the wisdom of the past or to suffer the clear workings of intelligence to be tampered with by emotion and sentiment; to uphold before the mind, as the governing principle of a true independence, loyalty to every element of truth and right—this is to carry into all Christian service the honourable name of Christ.

Therefore 'never quench the fire of the Spirit, never disdain prophetic revelations but test them all, retaining what is good and abstaining from whatever kind is evil' (Moffatt).

Testing our Faith

1 Thess. v. 21.—'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'

The extension of scientific knowledge in all phases of life, the popular study of philosophy among all classes of people, and the general application of the scientific method have raised serious questions which have disturbed the faith of many people in our day.

What then is faith? It is a state of confidence in which the mind has come to rest in some definite conclusion. The scientist has certain convictions about Nature which he no longer doubts. As individuals we have certain convictions about our friends which we need no longer doubt. As religious people we want certain convictions about the ultimate realities of life. This state of confidence about the ultimate realities of life we call faith.

There are two kinds of certainty. There is first of all that which comes within the limits of science. For example, there is no longer any question about the composition of water. Two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen always produces the same result. Whenever you put two colours together you always get a third

colour. This is one type of certainty which is established by science and can be proved by the scientific method. There is, however, another type of certainty none the less real, but which comes within the realm of personal experience. How can you prove mother love? How can you prove by the scientific method that the child loves its mother more than any one else? You cannot prove prayer by science but by personal experience.

The first step for us to take is to make up our minds what we want to believe, what we must believe. Suppose we had to give definite convictions, to answer definite questions. What would those questions be? What could we not live without? We would pass by all trivial questions and we would ask questions vitally serious and full of meaning for life itself. We would ask such questions as these: Is there a God of love such as Jesus called Father? Was Jesus Christ what He claimed to be? Will there be beyond the grave a conscious personal existence for all of us? What does God want us to do while we are here?

The scientific method cannot help us to answer any of these questions, because science deals with material things. These questions are spiritual. How can we arrive at certainty? How can we prove all things? What are the pathways to faith?

1. There is *the pathway of authority*. When we have some question to be answered, we go to one who is recognized as an authority. The pathway of authority leads us, when we have some religious question to ask, to accept the testimony of others.

To prove all things cannot mean that there are no fixed principles which may be considered settled and to be taken for granted. The mass of men must receive their theoretical knowledge of religion as they do that of politics, of science, of morality, by inheritance and teaching. As the world would make no progress in scientific and literary knowledge if each student had to investigate everything and there were no data to begin with, so there would soon be little morality or religion left if babes, instead of learning the first principles of Christ at their mother's knee, were to ask for proof at every point, and take nothing for granted.

But even authority is questioned to-day. Many people are asking serious questions about it. The Church has been mistaken and has taken the wrong side on many questions. This pathway of authority does not satisfy many modern men. Especially among young people is there a revolt against authority.

To one who accepts authority questions can be settled without a doubt. But what about one who has lost confidence in authority and tradition? One of the apostles refused to believe the testimony of Peter, Matthew, and John. Is there no other pathway for one who questions authority?

2. There is *the pathway of reason*. This pathway is open to all of us. No one is called upon to accept any belief against which his reason rebels. Faith that is not reasonable cannot be vital and helpful to us.

If modern thought stands for anything, it stands for the right of the intellect to challenge and to question every affirmation of science or religion. On the witness stand everything which makes demand upon our acceptance is required to give its testimony. It may be that the modern world has too much exalted the intellect. However that may be, it is true that there is little place to-day for anything that cannot meet and pass the test of reasonableness.

Faith, therefore, must be reasonable. When there comes a conflict between what men are asked to believe and that which in loyalty to truth it is possible for them to believe, they will turn from tradition and authority to allegiance to that reason which they believe to be God's greatest gift. But faith is reasonable. It is able to demonstrate its right to a place in the scheme of life of the thoughtful man. Nor is the thoughtful man rightly using his power of judgment if he invariably rejects all that he is not yet able to understand. The truth is always greater than our present comprehension of it. It is the duty of the thinking man to keep on thinking. Like the man who built his house upon the rock, he must dig deep until he comes to the foundation of the undeniable.

¶ Cardinal Newman declared that dogma was the essential ingredient of his faith, and that religion as a mere sentiment is a dream and a mockery. But he was so afraid of 'the all-corroding, all-dissolving scepticism of the intellect in religious enquiries' that he placed the safeguard of faith in 'a right state of heart,' and refused to trust his mind to think its way through to God.[1]

[1] H. S. Coffin, *Some Christian Convictions*, 29.

The man who follows the leadership of reason should enlarge his faith rather than diminish it. It is no sign of freedom in intellect voluntarily to live in the prison house of narrow thought. We do well to heed the words with which Holmes ended his greatest poem, 'Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul.' Test the claims of faith as much as we will, but in our testing seek for the true and the great.

3. *The pathway of experience* is the most practical of all. How does the doctor know that the serum will prevent diphtheria? Does he appeal to authority, reason or intuition? No! The only way he can prove it is by experiment. He must try it. Suppose you come to a stream that is covered with ice. How can you prove that the ice will bear your weight? Reason and authority may help you, but the only sure way of proving it is to try and see—to experiment. The woman of Samaria who came to Jesus at the well went back to her village and told her neighbours. They came and saw Jesus and talked with Him. Then they said, 'Now we believe, not because of what the woman said, but because we have seen and know.'

¶ A well-known scientist tells in a little book how he came to have his religious doubts cleared away. A bridge of reason had to be built on which his mind could cross from doubt to faith. What his particular bridge was does not matter, for people have different difficulties, and what may be a bridge for one may be of no help to another. But even when the bridge had been found, he had still to cross over into the spiritual country and explore it for himself.[1]

We may test our faith by any of these ways. Suppose, for example, we take the first question concerning the existence of God. Authority gives an affirmative answer. The Church, tradition, and the Bible all say that there is a God. For those who follow the pathway of authority the question is settled. Those who do not follow this pathway may go on, 'Is it reasonable to believe in God?' There is no scientific information to the contrary. Reasonable people believe that the answer of theism is the most reasonable. Our question passes the test of reason. Down deep in the soul of man something, some one, calls him upward. Has not Augustine said, 'Our souls are restless until they rest in Him.'

[1] James Reid, *Where the New World Begins*, 41.

Pascal says 'the heart has its reasons that reason cannot understand.' And Tennyson in *In Memoriam* puts it thus:

I found Him not in world or sun,
  Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
  Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
  I heard a voice 'believe no more'
  And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
  The freezing reason's colder part,
  And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

¶ Authority has great weight with me. To me it is tremendously strengthening to think of the great saints and scholars who have found life in Christ. As far as my intellect allows, I have asked questions along every inch of the road I have travelled, only to find the orthodox belief which Christianity has taught for two thousand years utterly convincing. But above all I have become more and more sure that in the twentieth century, in this busy world, an ordinary man may make vital contact with Jesus Christ. He offers His friendship to you, offers to share your life, to help you carry your burden, to substitute His peace for your restlessness, to share your sorrow and your pain, and to lead you to those heights towards which with longing eyes in our best moments we all look.[2]

Christianity is life and not a series of propositions. If our Christianity becomes to us only a creed, a bundle of opinions, a sentiment, if it ceases to be a power for good in our lives, men will think that it is a dead thing which should be buried out of sight. It is then our duty not merely so to argue that the world shall listen to us when we ask, 'Why do you not believe as we do?' but so to act that the world of its own accord shall ask, 'Why cannot we live as you do?'

Intercession

1 Thess. v. 25.—'Brethren, pray for us.'

Common to all forms of religion worth the name is the practice of prayer. It is not surprising,

[2] Leslie D. Weatherhead.

therefore, that we should find the precept and the practice of prayer alike enthroned at the heart of the Christian religion, prayer indeed being made the Christian's paramount obligation. At a time when our minds are obsessed by the marvels of scientific discovery, particularly in the realm of physics, it may be salutary if we remind ourselves that there is a spiritual realm where tremendous results may also be achieved.

1. 'We hear,' said William James, and the words are as applicable now as when he wrote them, 'in these days of scientific enlightenment, a great deal of discussion about the efficacy of prayer; and many reasons are given us why we should not pray, whilst others are given us why we should. But in all this very little is said of why we *do* pray, which is simply that we cannot *help* praying.' No! We cannot help praying, and if sometimes we pray in obedience to what we can only call a blind and blundering instinct, we ought to realize that this instinct directs us to a realm whose vastness and whose possibilities can never thoroughly be explored. We do not require to go any further than the New Testament to discover what prayer can mean and can do. With the New Testament in our hands it becomes at once apparent that prayer ought to be a commanding and controlling force in our lives.

When we are moved instinctively to pray, it is generally for someone or something of real concern to us, little realizing that these automatic intercessions, so to call them, require to be set against the background of the will and purpose of God, for the foundation of all prayer worthy of being dignified with the name is recognition of our indebtedness to the Most High. A good many of our intercessions are bound to fail because they have never been purged of an element of sheer selfishness. One has known people to pray, for example, for the safety of a loved one in time of war, who have themselves never been conspicuous for any attempt to honour God in other ways. The instinct is there all right, and it is a sure instinct, but it has never been cleansed in the flame of devotion. The antecedent and necessary devotion to Him has simply been by-passed, and God is expected to answer without any initial New Testament obligation having been fulfilled. The prayer of the publican was commended over against that of the pharisee, we remember. It was brief enough. That was one of its merits. But it was on the right lines: 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' That is prayer starting from the right place.

2. Again, there are prayers that are rendered nugatory, because they are paralysed by doubts and hesitations as to whether prayer has any value at all. The form of words may be used, but only in a half-hearted fashion, as if concession were being made to custom and tradition rather than supplication to a King who exercises authority. Such prayers are offered in the questioning frame of mind indicated by William Watson:

> And dreaming much, I never dare
> To dream that in my prisoned soul
> The flutter of a trembling prayer
> Can move the Mind that is the Whole.
> Though kneeling nations watch and yearn,
> Does the primordial purpose turn?

It is certainly difficult to imagine the 'primordial purpose' turning, but, unless we have a strong, resolute belief in God and His power, our prayers are not likely to be distinguished for their potency.

3. There must be no arbitrary limitation of what intercession may be expected to accomplish. It is clear, of course, that we are more likely to see obvious results when we pray for something like the bestowal of the gift of some desirable quality in our own lives. Dr. Kelman in his book on Robert Louis Stevenson remarks that nearly all Stevenson's prayers contain a petition for courage, and courage is obviously one of the grandest traits in the character of R.L.S. Dr. Kelman sums this up with the remark: 'It will generally be found that a man's most distinguishing feature is that for which he has oftenest prayed.'

But why may not God grant, if He will, yet greater things? Why may He not influence the lives of others for whom we pray, or, on occasion, spare them? Why may He not alter the destiny of nations? Dr. Glover tells a story of a College President in America whose College was in sore need of funds. 'He screwed up his courage and went to a benevolent millionaire, asking for 10,000 dollars. His appeal did not

interest the rich man. A little later he met the rich man's son, and told him about it. "You made a mistake," said the young man. "It would not interest him. He is looking for some institution to which he can give a quarter of a million in a lump." ' Dr. Glover comments that half an hour given to Paul's compounds of the word *Hyper* might open our eyes to the scale of the thoughts of God, the freedom and range of his ideas as to what God is, and what He can do.

There is little doubt at all that our prayers are hindered as often by the inadequacy of the sweep of our intercessions as by the imperfections of our sympathy. There may be segments of the Church's work that do not fasten themselves upon our heart and conscience as they should. There are some who are only mildly concerned about the conversion of the Jews, and others who do not overburden their prayers with special intercessions for Foreign Missions. We conceive the concerns of Omnipotence to be strangely akin to those dictated to us by our own prejudices. It is told of Florence Nightingale that she prayed not according to the sinner's need, but according to how she liked him. 'I could not pray for George IV. I thought the people very good who prayed for him. . . . William IV I prayed for a little. But when Victoria came to the throne, I prayed for her in a rapture of feeling and my thoughts never wandered.' We may smile at such arbitrariness, but we may not be devoid of it ourselves. Let our prayers go ranging wide.

4. There must be continuous and vigorous intercession for individual men and women. Many lives have been kept by knowledge of intercessions continually offered for them; and one need know only a little of Christian leaders, with their urgent requests for the support of their friends' prayers, to see what encouragement they always have found in the assurance that supplications were offered in their behalf. For Peter to know that the Master was interceding for him was in itself a source of sustenance and strength. They say that Luther when he felt particularly strong would exclaim, 'I feel as if I were being prayed for.' And Paul entreats others to pray for him—'Brethren, pray for us.'

¶ Cromwell writes to his admirals at sea: 'You have, as I verily believe and am persuaded, a plentiful stock of prayers going for you daily, sent up by the soberest and most approved ministers and Christians in this nation; and, notwithstanding some discouragements, very much wrestling of faith for you; which is to us and I trust will be to you, a matter of great encouragement.' [1]

Intercession is never more real than when it is directed to the individual. Here our affections and our loyalties may be engaged most deeply of all, and in the highest of all ministries. Who can set limit to the beneficent results accruing? We speak often of a good heredity as a form of capitalized grace, but how many of its results may not be due to the prayers of father for son, and mother for daughter. Monica and Augustine are still bound together. In that distinguished novel, *Brideshead Revisited*, by Evelyn Waugh, the author makes Julia say, when sorely tempted to do something she knew to be wrong: 'I saw to-day there was one thing unforgivable, the bad thing I was on the point of doing, that I'm not quite bad enough to do; to set up a rival good to God's. Why should I be allowed to understand that? It may be because of Mummy, Nannie, Cordelia, Sebastian, keeping my name in their prayers.'

Happy are those whose names are kept in the prayers of the saints of God: happy are those who may be named in the prayers of even such unworthy servants as we are ourselves.[2]

God the Father Almighty

2 Thess. i. 2.—'God our Father.'

1. 'I BELIEVE in God, the Father Almighty.' That is the beginning of our Christian faith. When we say 'I believe in God, the Father Almighty,' we mean, or should mean, that we are ready to base our attitude to life, our choice of behaviour, our hopes and ambitions on the assumption that there is a Sovereign Power ruling over creation and the world of Nature, over the ways of men and of nations, and over time, change and death; and that that Sovereign Power is concerned for our individual well-being as a father is concerned for the well-being of his children. Can we believe this?

[1] H. E. Fosdick.
[2] R. J. Wedderspoon.

There are many things in the world which seem to be inconsistent with this belief. We do not lose anything by admitting that. Man's mind can hardly hope at this stage to see the whole of truth all neatly fitted together. There are sure to be bits and pieces of experience which don't seem to fit. There is, however, considerable evidence even from things seen and temporal which does point towards such a belief in God. There is the system and order in the world of Nature; there is the pattern in human life, for while the good do not always prosper, and the wicked do not always suffer, there is in human development and in the rise and fall of nations a moral pattern. Besides this evidence, there is the marked fact that life based on this faith in God, the Father Almighty, produces a personality and character which our inner judgment recognizes as admirable and heroic. Supremely and uniquely, life based on this faith produced Jesus of Nazareth. If our inner judgment admits that in Him we see the finest product human life has achieved, we can hardly do better than base our lives on the same basic faith on which His life was so successfully built. And, when we do base our lives on this faith, the surprising thing is not the apparent inconsistencies in life; the surprising thing is the amount of light that is shed upon the mysteries of life, and the degree of confidence and conviction which our experience of life brings to support this faith until it becomes a certainty. Consider then the value of such a faith in this life.

2. Life in this world is a somewhat risky adventure. The things that happen to us and to our children and our friends depend upon so many different people. A careless lorry-driver may drive on to the pavement and cause any one or more of us injury or even death. We are dependent also upon men and women of a different generation and of different races. Well-meaning men with a narrow line of vision created the lopsided society of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century and were thus responsible for the inheritance of poverty and crime into which many children of this century were born. Men of different race with conflicting ideas of a paradise upon the earth can seize political power and have us all involved in a war which we do not want. And so much of what happens to us depends also upon our own ignorant and incompetent handling of a life of which we have no previous experience. So often it is only after we have taken some irretrievable step that we know what we should have done instead. Life is a decidedly risky adventure. It must be so, of course. We cannot learn to live unless we are allowed freedom to have a shot at living. That is true of all these other men and women too. So we and they involve each other in the consequences of our wrong, stupid, or careless management of life. What a business life is! No wonder so many people are nervy, irritable, so wary, cunning, and suspicious. But to be nervy, irritable, wary, cunning, and suspicious only makes you a further source of misery to yourself and hurt to other people.

Some people get all worked up over the problem of evil. It is, however, quite easy to see how evil comes in and how it grows. The real puzzle is how good comes in and how good manages to survive in the midst of nervy self-interest. It has only managed to survive because many men and women, and most of all, Jesus of Nazareth, have been able to feel underneath them the everlasting arms of God. They have been able to face the risky adventure of life with a calm disregard of what it may bring, because they have felt their kinship with a Father who is eternal. They have been able to keep their minds free, their hearts pure and their hands clean, because they know that the Almighty Father will not let them down. And they have been able to bring patience, mercy and kindliness into this foolish and nervous world, because they know that since the Father Almighty is Sovereign of all, no lives are outside His care and jurisdiction. The real puzzle is the survival and growth of good, but that also is understood when you range yourself with Jesus of Nazareth and the great cloud of witnesses and say, 'I, too, believe in God, the Father Almighty.'

3. Another line of thought is this. A car passes and you jump and say, 'That car was going far too fast.' You know that there is something wrong with all the mad dash to get faster and faster ways of doing things; to get more and more activity crowded into every brief hour of the day, and to steal more and more hours from the night; to push on with a 'sorry-can't-stop' testiness through all seven

days of the week. There is no time for thought, no time for kindness or for courtesy. The old lady who fell as she was trying to board a bus said, 'Oh, they were quite polite. They stepped *over* me, not on top of me, to get on to the bus.' What is the matter with us? It is another form of our nervousness. We've grown very conscious of the relentless speed of time and change. At the beginning of the century Thomas Hardy wrote a book of poems, *Time's Laughing Stocks*, to show how time and change make fools of us all. In youth the passing of time brings new strength, more power and opportunities; but before we have learned to use these powers, the process changes, and time, passing ever more quickly, brings loss of strength and decay of powers. Our bodies fail, our eyes grow dim and our minds begin to play tricks upon us. Milton bewails the extravagance of time, the expanse of vanished sights and the loss of precious friends hid in death's dateless night. Time and change, decay and death; what demons these are to torment us! 'Hurry up, you are growing old.' If you have no faith, you cannot stand that very long without getting nervy, ruthless and self-centred like so many other people.

Down through the years there comes a distant voice to steady us. The voice of the Book of Deuteronomy. 'The eternal God is thy refuge.' Eternal God! The *timeless* God! And another voice, the voice of James—'God, the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness.' And yet another voice, the voice of John—'God hath given to us eternal life.' Timeless life! Oh, the relief to stop for breath in the mad rush of life and listen to these voices! To be calm, though days and years slip quickly by! To be able again to think how things may be done best instead of how they may be done quickest. God is eternal and hath given us eternal life. Do we say 'No time'? We do not need time. It is a question rather of the intensity with which we seek to live in this faith. 'Change and decay in all around I see.' Yes, but the God who changes not abides with me.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty. This faith is not a post-dated cheque to keep us quiet here with a promise of payment in heaven. It is a faith with power to give us the mastery of life here and now. And it is the faith which has to its credit the masterpiece of human life—Jesus of Nazareth.

WILLIAM MARTIN

The Ideal Life

2 Thess. i. 11, 12.—'Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.'

1. THIS prayer of the Apostle Paul expresses the ideal life for all who name the name of Christ. This purpose, which he requests in fervent petition to God might be fulfilled in the lives of those he had come so to love, expresses the highest, the best, the only worthy type of life for all who profess and call themselves Christians. Unless one who is called by the name of Christ is living for Christ's glory, unless he is adding to the sum total of that glory in the world, unless he is reflecting it as he beholds that glory day by day, and is thus himself adding in some degree to the light of the world, he is failing in that unto which Christ redeemed him. We have heard more than once in these days that the chief end of man, in the purpose and mind of God, is that he should glorify Him; and when the Apostle here prays for the Thessalonians in these terms he is praying that every one of them may, in Christ Jesus, rise to the height of God's redemptive purpose for his life.

Whatever kind of life we live we are each giving our own impression of God to the world, consciously and unconsciously, wittingly and unwittingly. The world is taking its measure of Christ not from the Book, not from the things which the Christian Church declares from its pulpits, but from the things it sees in the lives of those who profess this Faith. We are the world's Bible. Upon us rests the responsibility of giving such interpretation of Christ to the world that men shall be compelled to consider Him, to believe in Him, to draw near to Him, to revere Him, and ultimately, through the ministry of our lives, to trust and serve Him.

¶ 'A character,' said Dean Inge, 'can't be confuted.' People may not be interested enough in Christianity to listen to its case, or they may scoff it out of court, or may be stumbled by real difficulties in their path. But when they see a really Christian man, and watch the thing being lived out, there is no answering that! 'He made me a Christian,' said Stanley about

Livingstone, 'and he never knew that he was doing it!'[1]

2. At first sight such a declaration as this in regard to the possibility of life seems almost beyond credibility—to imagine that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the name of the Saviour, the name which is higher than all other names, that name in which every knee shall bow, should receive glory in such a poor, weak, and insignificant thing as this life of ours! It almost seems like painting the lily or gilding refined gold. And yet, while we cannot add to the glory and brightness of the noonday sun, we may, by opening every closed room in the house, by taking the shutters from every darkened apartment, give the sun more space in which to exercise his dominion. And likewise with Jesus Christ. We cannot add to His glory, even as we cannot take from His power. But we may open our hearts to Him, and we may seek so to live as to open other hearts and lives and minds to Him, that He shall be glorified in them; and so His dominion be increased.

There are three things which constitute the glory of Jesus Christ in any life, however humble or high. Three tests are suggested by God's own Word. We turn back to the earthly life of our Lord for them. From the Cradle to the Cross His life was lived under the dark clouds of men's rejection. There was little glory from its commencement to its close. It seemed to be lived under a sun that was eclipsed. And yet three times during its course it was as though the clouds parted and a ray of golden glory fell upon Him. And from His lips there came the declaration, 'Now is the Son of man glorified!' On each of these three occasions the cause of His glory is so specific and clear that we may learn from them how to test our own lives and how to assure our hearts before God.

(1) First of all, there came one day to Him a company of Greeks. They were men trained to look for the philosophical, the intellectual, the highly mental in everything. They came to the disciples of Christ, and said: 'Sir, we would see Jesus.' The disciples went to the Lord and told Him the desire of these strangers. Immediately Jesus said: 'The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.'

From this we gather that Christ is glorified when faith comes to men by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. For these men had obviously heard about His words and His work. They had heard of the wonderful and yet so simple things He said which arrested men's minds and fired them with desire, and at the same time disclosed to them their weakness, and transformed them. And they had heard of His work. They had heard of His healing power, they had heard of His sovereign might; and they came to Him with honest and sincere hearts. 'We would see Jesus! We would put to the test of personal experience these things that have been reported of Him!'

Paul once gave his own credentials by saying: 'Am I not an apostle. Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ the Lord?' That was the beginning of life to Paul and it is the beginning of life to all who follow him as he followed Christ. The life which glorifies the name of the Lord Christ, the only life which is worthy of account, begins when a person honestly seeks to see Christ for himself.

(2) It is now a very different scene. It was on the eve of our Lord's death, when He gathered His friends together for that farewell meal in which He broke bread and poured out wine in token of His broken Body and shed Blood. There was one in that little company whose exterior demeanour and friendship masked a heart of treachery and disloyalty. When Jesus had given the sop to Judas he went out into the night; and the click of the latch had hardly been heard when Jesus turned to the eleven and said: 'Now is the Son of man glorified!' The traitor had gone out; and the hearts of the eleven, weak and failing men though they were, who just struggled to keep up with their Master in loyalty, were set as one towards Him. 'Now is the Son of man glorified!' And there is a close and clear analogy in every human life. Christ is glorified in us when all that is akin to the Judas spirit is cast out, when the spirit of the world is expelled, when the spirit of self-interest and self-pleasing is excluded, when the heart is leal and true to Him.

What drove Judas out from that Upper Room was the presence and the word of Jesus Christ. The light expelled the darkness. The Christ sent out the spirit of evil by His silent power. So it is in our life. He can break the power, cancel the sin, and set us free. He can give us immediate and present deliverance from everything which betrays Him before the world. He

[1] A. J. Gossip, *Experience Worketh Hope*, 60.

can so take hold of our spirit and change us by His power that never again shall we dishonour Him in our private or public life.

> What doth strip the seeming beauty
> From the idols of the earth?
> Not a sense of right or duty,
> But a sight of Peerless Worth.
>
> 'Tis that look that melted Peter,
> 'Tis that face that Stephen saw,
> 'Tis that heart that wept with Mary
> Can alone from idols draw—
>
> Draw and win and fill completely,
> 'Till the cup o'erflows its brim.
> What have we to do with idols
> Since we've companied with Him?

The Son of Man is glorified in us when we become unworldly, when everything in our lives, within and without, is under His undisputed control. Not when we call Him 'Lord, Lord,' but when we begin, by the instinct of His imparted life, to do the things that He says.

(3) One other instance. Jesus and His disciples had left that room with all its sacred memories, and somewhere—it may have been in the Garden—our Lord offered that high-priestly prayer, in which He spoke to His Father about His followers: 'Father, I have given them Thy word, and they have kept it. Father, they are not of the world, as I am not of the world, but I have sent them into the world as Thou didst send Me. Father, I am glorified in them!'

In the darkest hour of all, when the shadows of evil were gathering thick upon Him, Christ was able to look upon that little band of loyal followers with all their faults, with all their imperfections, with all their incomplete consecrations, and say of them: 'Father, I am glorified in them!' And the deduction is this: that when one seeks Christ, when he willingly opens his heart to Christ that the Judas spirit may be cast out, and accepts the word of Christ which calls him to sonship, which takes him out of the world and yet sends him back into the world as a messenger and a witness, then Christ says: 'The Son of man is glorified!' In other words, it means for us that when we take this, His standard of life, and make it the law of our lives, even though we fail, even though we never realize to the full our own ideals, even though our obedience is mixed with much self-disappointment, we glorify Christ. We glorify Christ when we set ourselves in the way of doing His commandments.

Paul in the text goes on to say, not only shall His name be glorified in us, but 'ye in him.' There is a reciprocal glory; for as we seek to glorify Christ He glorifies us. We never have realized ourselves until we set ourselves to the task of glorifying the Son of God.

¶ I sat one day by the side of a stream to read a little, and as I lifted my eye from my book there seemed to be a diamond flashing in the bed of the little stream. I plunged my hand into the water and brought it out; and lo, it was just an ordinary pebble, a piece of feldspar! All its brightness had come by its being submerged in the stream and being illuminated by the direct rays of the sun. And I learned then that the only way this dull life of mine can be made bright, the only way in which it can be glorified and made a thing of beauty, is as it is submerged under the Will of God in the cleansing stream of consecration to His service, and illuminated by His own favour—glorified 'in Him.'[1]

3. Paul's last word is a favourite with him—'the grace of our God.' Paul has in mind a kind of weak panic in the Thessalonian Church caused by the utterly impossible nature of their high task. He prays for them that they may glorify the Name of Christ; but well as it is for them to have the ideal they cannot reach it. And Paul knows this, in himself and in them; so he adds: 'According to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.' Not according to their own resolving, not according to their own mental ability, not according to their own spiritual resoluteness, but 'according to the grace of God.' Let us take heart! According to His mercy He saved us; and according to His grace He will enable us to glorify His name until we see Him face to face.

The Two Mysteries

2 Thess. ii. 7.—'The mystery of iniquity.'
1 Tim. iii. 16.—'Great is the mystery of godliness.'

It may be platitudinous, but it is true to say, and if true cannot be too frequently admitted,

[1] J. Stuart Holden.

that life has its problems for all of us. Some of these are purely personal and individual, with which we must do battle by ourselves. Others, however, are of a different character. They are common to all men who think deeply and seriously of life and of the conditions in which we are called upon to live it.

That being so, it may be a consolation to some of us to hear such a convinced Christian as Paul use the word 'mystery' in connection with certain aspects of life, even though it must be borne in mind that that word had not quite the connotation for him that it has for the majority of us. He, too, apparently, had discovered that life was not quite so simple as he had once supposed. There were questions which, with all his faith, he found difficult to answer.

Careful consideration of his two statements, however, ought to provide us with more than consolation. It ought to provide us with hope and with courage. For this fact becomes clear, that, since Paul recognized not simply one mystery, as so many of us do, but two mysteries, 'the mystery of iniquity' and 'the mystery of godliness,' he faced life not dejectedly but hopefully.

Suppose, therefore, that we think of these two mysteries and of the importance of remembering that there *are* two mysteries.

1. It is possible, indeed highly probable, that all of us have brooded long and deeply, as Paul did, upon the mystery of iniquity.

It confronted Paul within the compass of his own life in which, he gives us to understand, a conflict between good and evil was continually being waged. 'O wretched man that I am!', he said, 'who shall deliver me from the body of this death.' And again, 'For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.'

Where Paul confronted the mystery of iniquity is where we all make contact with it—within our own lives. Time and again, though we know what is right, we proceed to do what is wrong—why, we are often at a loss to tell. 'I have had more trouble with myself,' said a very famous man, 'than with any man whom I have met.' A statement, surely, which many of us could make.

Though contact with the mystery of iniquity is made within our own lives, however, that does not by any means exhaust the mystery. In the world in which we live we are brought face to face with it time and time again. Within our own life-time men of like passions with ourselves seemed possessed by some power which used them for its own destructive purposes. Folk who desired nothing more than to be left in peace to enjoy their simple pleasures were harried, dispossessed, and driven to seek safety and asylum in strange lands. Things that thinking men have valued through the generations were under assault and many of them bear the scars of battle. It is all very mysterious. Why such things should take place, why men like ourselves should derive satisfaction from actions which violate all canons of decency, why the way of the wicked should so often prosper, we cannot understand.

To say that some of us have brooded upon this 'mystery of iniquity' is to state the sober truth. We have brooded so long and so deeply in many cases that we have found it difficult to have the faith in God we once had; and some of us, as a result of our brooding, have reached conclusions about man which bid fair to despoil us of any hope for the future of the world. Burdened and perplexed, many of us, it has to be admitted, are facing life dejectedly.

Far be it from me to minimize the mystery of iniquity or to suggest that its effect upon our faith is not understandable. To do so would be to fly in the face of facts and to forget that what troubles so many of us troubled our Lord likewise—the obtuseness, the obstinacy, the callousness of men. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!'

The mystery of iniquity, let us frankly admit, has always been very real, and it is as real to-day as ever it has been. But many of us, as Paul's utterances remind us, have concentrated upon the mystery of iniquity as though there were only the one mystery in the world. What encouraged the great apostle was the fact, which all the evil in the world could not obscure, that there is another mystery, 'the mystery of godliness,' another Power at work in the world besides the power of evil, the Power of goodness. And, as he confronted himself with that fact, Paul was delivered from the awful dejection to

which contemplation of the mystery of iniquity by itself leads.

Is what delivered him from his dejection capable of delivering us from ours ?

2. If we are to be honest, many of us must admit that we have never given the time to a consideration of godliness that we have given to a consideration of iniquity. Somehow, account for it how we may, godliness has never been a mystery to us in the sense in which iniquity has been a mystery. If a man succeeds in preserving his integrity and the respect of his colleagues through a lengthy business career, we, while we pay tribute to him, seldom stay to enquire what made his accomplishment possible, or why he should have triumphed over temptations to which others have succumbed. And the attitude which has characterized many of us has characterized others also. For one story of a home in which love and peace and happiness have reigned, how many stories are published of homes wrecked by hate and selfishness ? How often have the lives of good men captured the headlines of the Press ? Anything like so often as the lives of the world's rogues ?

Paul, let it be said, did not make our mistake. He recognized the power of evil and contemplated sorrowfully the lives over which it held sway. But he recognized another Power which held sway over vastly more lives than some people imagined. The godly men and women with whom he came in contact, the folk who through the years had been held in esteem, who had triumphed where others had fallen, all provided evidence of a Power outside the human resources whose limits Paul well knew. And to that Power he was quick to recognize in others he himself submitted, and, submitting, found deliverance. 'O wretched man that I am ! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death,' he said. Yes, but he also said, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' It was an endless source of comfort and of courage to him that, if sin abounded in the world, grace did much more abound. There was, he admitted, a mystery of iniquity. But he assured himself and others that there is also a mystery of godliness.

Is not the fact of which Paul reminded himself one which we must keep in remembrance if we are to have a fair and properly balanced view of life ? Haven't many of us been so occupied with the men who are under the thraldom of evil we have omitted to consider those, and they are not a few, whose works are not of the darkness but of the light ? Have we not attributed the resolve of such to preserve truth and beauty and righteousness simply to what we are pleased to call man's sense of right ? Is there nothing of mystery attaching to some men's decision to sacrifice themselves that others and the things they have cherished may be preserved ?

What should prevent us from seeing what Paul saw ? The facts which he could not deny confront us in our day as in his day they confronted him. If some in our time are under the dominion of evil, others, it is plain, are under the sway of goodness. If there is a mystery of iniquity, is there not also a mystery of godliness ?

3. But it is worth noting, in the last place, that Paul would have us face life hopefully, as he himself faced it, not simply because there is opposed to the power of evil a Power that worketh for righteousness. After all, the fact that there is a mystery of godliness opposing the mystery of iniquity may suggest to some that the conflict which has been waged through the generations is to continue through all future generations, the victory going sometimes to one side and sometimes to the other, and the prospect of a conflict without definite issue we don't find altogether heartening. It is necessary, therefore, that we bear in mind Paul's further ground for confidence.

'This word "mystery" which he uses,' it has been pointed out, 'is always used in the New Testament for what has been hidden, but is subsequently revealed.' And it is important that we remember that. That, in point of fact, is what I meant when, at the outset, I suggested that the word 'mystery' had a different connotation for Paul than it has for the majority of us who use the word of something which, we feel, must always be inexplicable. Evil, Paul meant to indicate, might be rampant, its victories unquestionable, but some day its power would be overthrown. The hope of that ultimate victory, the belief that his steadfastness and loyalty in the evil day contributed something to that ultimate victory, gave Paul heart in a struggle which presented many difficulties, disappointments and setbacks. God, he was confident, so far from being indifferent or inactive,

would some day set His seal upon his and upon his colleagues' labours.

From first to last that is the hope which the Scriptures seek to convey. 'The light,' says John in the course of his Gospel, speaking of our Lord's coming into the world, 'the light shone in the darkness, but the darkness did not master it.' And because our Lord, though He suffered for righteousness' sake as none has ever suffered, was finally victorious, there is, says the New Testament, every reason for believing that the ultimate triumph will be, not with darkness, but with the light.

What a difference there would be in our attitude to life could we keep that hope, which the Scriptures inspire, constantly in mind. Our efforts, so far from appearing futile, as they so often do when we are without hope of ultimate victory, would be seen to be contributing to the final triumph. Our faith in the reasonableness of the universe and in the activity of God would be deepened and confirmed. We should face our difficulties, disappointments and setbacks as Paul faced his, with courage and in good heart.

Writing on one occasion to some friends who, like ourselves, were wont to lose heart, Paul exhorted them to be 'stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know,' he said, 'that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' It is, I believe, his message to us. There are, he reminds us, two mysteries, not just one as so many of us have supposed. And the final victory, he assures us, will be with godliness.

RODERICK BETHUNE

A Faithful Creator

2 Thess. iii. 3.—'However, the Lord is faithful; he will be sure to strengthen you and protect you' (Moffatt).
Heb. x. 23.—'He is faithful that promised.'
1 Thess. v. 24.—'Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.'

ALWAYS that is the final argument in Scripture on which these men fall back when the darkness falls on life. You can rely on God, so they assert with utter confidence.

But the honest Scriptures show us desperate souls who tell us bluntly that there come bleak moments when they more than half conclude the faith has fallen to pieces in their hands, that they have proved that there is nothing in it after all.

Jeremiah, for example, that affectionate sensitive soul, looks at God at times in a sheer bewilderment that can make nothing of His ways with him. Shuddering in his very soul, the man felt for one awful moment God had failed him, that the faith was but a fairy-tale, and that he had grown up and found it out; that there was no reality in it, nothing to help, nothing to grip and hold, nothing to meet his case and bring him through.

That was, of course, only the passing mood of a heart peevish from utter tiredness. Yet what if that appalling nightmare of his had been true, if there were nothing solid in the promises but only thin dream stuff that melts at a touch, if Richter's ghastly vision were plain fact, when he saw Jesus returning to earth to tell us with a faltering voice and the tears running down His cheeks that He had made a terrible mistake, and that conscience compelled Him to come back and own that He had been quite wrong; that, though He had searched for Him eagerly and desperately, far and wide through the endless eternities, there is no Father, and no kindly care about us, and no wise mind planning upon our behalf as He Himself had fondly hoped and thought; that we must somehow make shift for ourselves as best we can, for there is no one who can help us. 'Even so,' cried Dostoieffsky, audacious in his extremity, 'even if you proved to me that Christ is nothing but a myth, I would still cling to Him, and still believe in Him, because it is too beautiful to let it die, and I cannot manage without Him.' That, one can understand. Yet truth is truth, and must be followed, even if it did lead us into dry, waste places.

But, blessed be God's name, our way does not lie there. For the doubts that spring out on us, and stab at our hearts, are not the truth. That has been proved in countless lives like ours—been proved. And if we belaud the discoverers of mere mechanical inventions that save us a poor hour or two upon a journey, or add a little to our animal comfort, what do we not owe to the men who found God for us, who have tested and tried Him in every conceivable circumstance of life, and who tell us, as they have every right to do, that we can count on Him, that He will never fail us, that these wonderful

promises are not mere words; but that these things do actually happen, and these helps do really come even to ordinary folk like us. 'He is faithful that promised,' and you can rely on Him. 'He will do it,' that He said to you, is certain to stand to every letter of it, let your need be what it may. 'He will be sure to help you' and to see you through.

1. Sometimes it is *to help them through the difficulties of their common days* that there is given to hard-pressed folk this comfortable assurance of God's presence and helpfulness. And how many there are that need it. In Morley's *Life of Gladstone* there is an eerie chapter on the round-room at Hawarden in which there was stored much of the huge and varied correspondence of that long and crowded life. In the main it is a moving and pathetic record of brave hopes that died, and huge ambitions that went out, and men who ran well until something hindered them. There are triumphs and successes too, no doubt, but how much disappointment, heartache, sorrow! And so it is in the Apostle's correspondence, too. No one, he says himself, had any kind of difficulty but his first thought was to write to him. And as we read over his shoulder as he pens his answers, with their letters lying open there before him, again how much trouble and pain is in it all! And that is typical of all mankind.

To some there has come sorrow. Every morning they start out of their uneasy snatch of sleep to feel the old pain stabbing at their hearts and the appalling loneliness crushing in on them, like a flood. And others have not gained from life what it seemed to promise them. The business is not prospering these difficult days; or their health is failing somewhat, and work not now the daily interest it used to be; perhaps the family is vexing them, or at least it belongs to another generation than their own, and may let them see it finds them dull and stupid and old-fashioned in their outlook and ways, so that even at home, they feel lonely and out of things and left behind. The fiction of to-day is a terrible picture of life without religion, of boredom and a kind of despair driving unsatisfied hearts into all manner of extravagances, feverishly seeking something that will fill the days and help them to forget, and keep them from thinking. But the wiser turn to God. 'He will be sure to help you,' declares Paul; 'just how, I cannot tell, for there is an amazing ingenuity about His grace; but I am sure He will.'

2. But, as a rule, when this *assurance is given* in the Testament it is *to people who are discouraged about their spiritual life.* For so much less seems to be happening than they had expected; habits they have long resisted still master them, perhaps with a disheartening ease; God's grace looks curiously ineffective, in their case at least. To which Paul answers, If God called you (and you know He did) then He will stand to every word He ever said, and it will all come true. Would you deny what you had promised, or refuse to implement what you had signed with your own hand? No more will He. But 'if He called you, He will do it.'

No doubt, if you tire of the struggle and turn back, and say, 'Ah, well, there are other things in life than fellowship with Christ,' and slip aside to them, renouncing the quest, you may still rob yourself of what He is ready to heap upon you. But if you hold to it, as certainly as God is God it will come true. For, as Paul puts it confidently, speaking of the Jewish people who had slighted Him, and of God's faithful kindness towards them still, 'He never goes back on His promises and gifts'—no never.

But I have failed, you cry; failed utterly and abjectly! Then, says the Apostle, 'God is faithful and just to forgive.' As if to say, here is no place for pure grace any further, but rather, in view of God's pledges to us, of simple justice, of standing to His veracity. He said that He would do it, and He must and will.

The hope I dreamed of was a dream,
Was but a dream, and now I wake,
Exceeding comfortless, and worn, and old.
For a dream's sake.

That is unfair to God. For more is happening than you know, far more. Each year you return to your holiday quarters, and it is all unchanged to the casual glance. Yet really nothing is the same as what you left the time before. The rocks upon the hills have been weathered more deeply by another winter's frosts and ice; always the burns are tearing down the solid mountains, set and immovable though they seem; month after month these dwindle; and

away beneath the sea new continents are slowly being formed out of their silt, upon which there will flourish empires and civilizations when the world we know has vanished into nothingness. And in these characters of ours, too, there is much more going on than we can see. But even God needs time. To fashion Christ's image out of us is not an easy thing even for God. Yet to that impossible task He has given Himself; and one day it will all come true—that too.

3. But most impressive of all is that passage in which *Peter* in his final way *applies this reasoning to the mysteries of life*—the pain, the suffering, the sorrow that so haunt and baffle us. It will not do to push them hurriedly aside, with a cheap and shallow optimism that tries to defend God too easily. The whole point of the Book of Job is that it is such people, themselves safe and untouched by the shadows, and uttering maddening platitudes, who are impatiently thrust aside by God; and a soul, frenzied and bewildered and half blasphemous through agony, who is commended, on the ground that he at least was trying to feel his way to something honest and sincere, that really faced the bitter facts.

And yet, think how we may, and struggle as we can, will we ever get further here than that profound saying of Peter, 'Let those who suffer in accordance with the will of God commit their souls to a faithful Creator'? Surely we can assume that it was not in mockery He formed us, but that He had a plan; that He has not forgotten it nor tired of us, but that He stands to it, and is working it out; is, in short, 'a faithful Creator.' To that we have to come at last. Our dear ones die. And then, what then? The glory of the sunset fades for ever; the splendour of the flower falls and has vanished not to return ever again. And has this too gone out, this being we so loved! Of course, say some. 'The President of the Immortals had finished his sport with Tess.' But we think otherwise, thank God, and lower them down into the sullen grave with steady hands, committing them to 'a faithful Creator,' who did not surely fashion them only to blot them out again. In His loving hands we know that they are safe.

¶ When bedtime came for Mr. Canton's little girl, when the dark fell, and all the toys and playthings, all that she most loved, had to be put away,

She does not sob in sorrow,
Oh, father, do not break or injure these!
She knows that I shall fondly lay them by
For happiness to-morrow,
So leaves them trustfully,
And shall not I?

Or we bring back to God our broken hopes and faded dreams and wasted opportunities. And in what can we hope but in His faithfulness? 'Forsake not the work of Thine own hands,' urges a psalmist. And indeed that is a reasonable plea, a prayer that surely we dare urge. He made us for some deep and divine end. And, having made us, He will not cast us away, like a tool that has broken in His hand, a dream that might have been, but can't be any more. All He willed for us, that one day we shall be.

¶ May we not argue that God creates souls to perfect them, that time and eternity are man's opportunities, that in all our days here and hereafter we are but raw material in the hands of a faithful Creator? This seems to be the sum and substance of the gospel.[1]

With a God that we can trust, what can there be in life that need make us afraid? And when we come to die, if He be there—

Thou'st seen how closely, Abba, when at rest,
My child's head nestles to my breast;
And how my arm her little form enfolds,
Lest in the darkness she should feel alone;
And how she holds
My hand, my hands, my two hands in her own?
A little easeful sighing
And restful turning round,
And I too, on Thy love relying,
Shall slumber sound.

The Patience of Christ

2 Thess. iii. 5.—'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ' (*Margin*).

THERE was much impatience in the Thessalonian Church. We can see that by reading the Epistle. The cause of it was the widespread apprehension that the second coming of the

[1] F. A. Russell.

Lord was imminent. It is always hard to work quietly if to-morrow is like to prove a thrilling day. The young father has experienced that just before the birth of his first-born. And these Thessalonians, stirred with the apprehension that to-morrow might witness Christ's return, found it far from easy to be patient. They were restless, nervous, and excited. They were tempted to down tools. They were like schoolboys on the day before the holidays. It was for such that this most sane apostle offered the prayer of the text—the Lord direct your hearts into the patience of Christ. That is a prayer which is always needed, perhaps never more so than to-day. There is great social restlessness to-day.

The first thing which we have to bear in mind is that the word patience has a double meaning.

1. We use the word for instance in our common speech to describe *the power of quiet waiting*. The man who can wait quietly and confidently is, in common speech, the patient man. Friends who have lived in India will tell you how the natives await the railway train. They will gather on the railway platform hours before the arrival of the train. And there, perfectly contented, and without one single trace of weariness, they await the arrival of the train. It is the patience of the Oriental. And we venture to say there are few qualities more essential for success in life than a steady dogged patience such as that. Patience is the moral power of waiting for the thing that our heart is set upon. And in these snatching and impatient days what more timely prayer for us than this: The Lord direct our hearts into the patience of Christ.

¶ Some one has told of an incident in Aberdeen at the beginning of the last War. It was 1940. and the Queen (now Queen Mother) was paying a visit to the city. The crowds gathered near the Town House, waiting for the chance of seeing the Queen. It seemed a long time before the waiting was rewarded. So much so that one bystander said to another: 'It's a dreary business this waiting.' 'I don't think so,' said the other. 'I don't think it is dreary to wait if you are waiting for some one you are anxious to see. I think it is only dreary to wait when you are waiting for nothing.'

(1) First, think of Him at Nazareth: think of the patient waiting of these years, and all the time ringing in His heart, Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business. One and twenty comes, and He is a man now, and He hears the call of His people in His ear. Nine-and-twenty comes and the days are going by and He has only got a few more years to live. We talk much of the miracles of Christ but perhaps the greatest of them all was His quiet, patient waiting down at Nazareth.

(2) Or again, think of the temptation at the beginning of His ministry. 'All these kingdoms will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' We may note in passing what a tribute that is to the royal consciousness of Jesus. The devil only tempts with what appeals to us. There is no power or point in that temptation unless the Lord has been brooding upon sovereignty and hungering for the kingdoms of the world. Here there was a definite temptation. The Lord felt it with terrific force. It was to hurry on to the conquest of the world like another Alexander. And instead of that He chose the long, long trail that led by Gethsemane and Calvary.

One of the evangelists sums up His work in the sentence: 'He went about doing good.' He took no short cuts to His ends. He was working in the subtle media of human souls, and knew that the gains of character, the ripening of faith, the fruits of the spirit, could only come slowly. Though the world was His objective—nay, because it was—He gave all His time to the training of a few men. What a lesson to the fevered Thessalonian Church, to have their hearts directed to the patience of Christ.

How patient He was even in the little circle of work to which He limited Himself, going over the same lesson again and again with His slow disciples, unweariedly preparing that morsel of soil for the precious seed. If our hearts are directed into the patience of Christ, shall we not go back to our daily duties, to the burden and heat of the day, to the trials of our lot whatever they are, with a new resolution, with fresh courage, with renewed faith, with a consuming desire to do the will of God in the place where we are?

¶ 'I often think,' said Mrs. Ewing, 'that it is not in our Lord's Cross and Passion that His patience comes most home to us. To be patient before an unjust judge or brutal soldiers might

be almost a part of self-respect; but patience with the daily disappointments of a life "too good for this world," as people say, patience with the follies, the unworthiness, the ingratitude of those one loves—these things are our daily example.'

2. But then patience has another meaning and it is equally familiar. It is not waiting. It is endurance. Have you never known a man or woman who for years perhaps had to suffer pain? They were never well; they never knew what health was; at times they had almost intolerable anguish. Yet you never heard a murmur from their lips, never a fretful or complaining word, even when the suffering was sorest. That quiet, brave endurance of life's bitterness—that also in our common speech is patience; something very different from the other, for here there may be never a goal to aim at, but only the brave acceptance of to-day. To be cheerful in the adversities of life, unmurmuring in its recurrent sufferings, steadfast and serene amid its slanderings, unembittered amidst all its heartbreaks, *that* in our common speech is patience, not less than the moral bravery to wait for the goal that is very far away.

And the wonderful thing about our Lord is that He was perfect in that patience also. He who could wait for thirty years at Nazareth, endured beautifully the very sorest pain. Do we realize how the sinlessness of Christ must have augmented and intensified His suffering? Sin hardens, petrifies the feelings, coarsens every fibre of our being. And He was sinless, absolutely sinless, and being sinless, exquisitely sensitive—How His sinlessness intensified His suffering! He came unto His own and they received Him not. He was hated. He was scorned. He was rejected. They laughed at Him, and sometimes to be laughed at is a far bitterer thing than to be hated. And then He was betrayed, and all alone went down into the valley, for His own had forsaken Him and fled.

The Lord direct your hearts into the patience of Christ. 'What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone around Thy steps below.' With what perfect beauty He bore everything. Being reviled, He reviled not again. Not life's bitterest could stop Him hoping—not life's bitterest could stop Him loving—not life's bitterest could slay the peace and joy that nestled in the secret of His heart.

3. Order is heaven's first law, and the order of Scripture is inspired. The Lord direct your hearts into the patience of Christ—no, that is not what the Apostle says. We have missed something—there is something in between—and the something in between conveys the secret. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and *then*, and only then and always then, the patience of Christ is possible for you. If we believe He is our loving Heavenly Father—that He loves us as a father does his child—that He knows us, understands us, cares for us—that He is training us and will never let us down—then, and only then, in such a world as this, when the winds are contrary and things are difficult, is the patience of Christ possible for us. *That* was the great secret of Christ's patience. He endured because He saw the Father.

The Vice of Idleness

2 Thess. iii. 10.—'For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.'

These words, perhaps, formed a proverb commonly used among the Rabbis, and probably familiar to the Thessalonians. Paul adopts them as his own when he desires to rebuke the vice of idleness which had made its appearance among his converts at Thessalonica. It is easy to see that the circumstances of the apostolic Church laid it open to the assaults of imposture and indolence in a measure greater, perhaps, than in any later age. Conversion to Christianity very generally entailed upon the individual calamitous consequences. Society frowned upon him; he probably lost his employment, and certainly found the obtaining of fresh work extremely difficult and, perhaps, impossible. We know that the early converts to Christianity were mostly drawn from the poorer ranks of society; they were, therefore, without any fault of their own, thrown into a position of helplessness which appealed, and with reason, to the charity of the Church. That charity in those first days was indeed wide-reaching and self-forgetting beyond anything before or since. Even the 'hard pagan world' was compelled, in spite of itself, to observe and admire the mutual love of the disciples of Jesus. All around were hardness, cruelty, crowned and

insolent oppression; here in these little Christian communities were love, and sympathy, and manly self-respect.

But this generous charity of the Church, which aspired to give to the moral teachings of the Sermon on the Mount a faithful literal expression in practice, was abused by the incorrigible depravity of unworthy men. The name of discipleship was made the cloak of indolence and covetousness, and *godliness* came in some quarters to be regarded as literally a 'way of gain.'

In Thessalonica it would seem that another cause was operating in the direction of abuse. The notion that the return of Christ in glory was near at hand made some turn away in disgust from those commonplace duties, the due performance of which is not only necessary to the order of life, but also valuable for the discipline of character. Giving themselves up to an excessive exaltation of spirit, and abandoning the straightforward pathway of daily duty, they despised work and cast themselves for their maintenance upon the bounty of the Church.

Paul encounters them with the stern and simple rule of the text, 'if any would not work, neither should he eat.' Charity loses all its beneficence when it merely ministers to selfish idleness; the wilfully idle man must be held to forfeit all claim to the assistance of his brethren.

This commandment of the Apostle gained new authority from his own character and manner of life. No one could throw it in the face of Paul that he was an idle man, or lived an easy life. When he urged his converts to be industrious he could invite them to follow the example of his own action. So in this Epistle to the Thessalonians he appeals to the witness of his own life. It was from a life full of arduous labour, of anxious care, of sustained suffering, that this law of work proceeded.

Now the text contains a lesson suitable for all times.

1. In the first place we may observe that it asserts a great truth of human life, very obvious indeed, and yet very easily and very frequently forgotten—the truth of the connexion between human work and human sustenance. It is one of the unfortunate results of the extreme complexity of civilized life that we lose sight of this connexion. It is difficult to realize that work is absolutely necessary for the '*daily bread*' of society, when our own work seems perhaps to have a very shadowy connexion with the provision of food. Men in society are linked together in a great organization of mutual help, and it is only by the frank and honest performance by each man of his own task that the well-being of all can be secured. Civilization has its foundation in human labour, and any confusion, or discord, or paralysis in the sphere of human labour disorders and imperils civilization itself. Work is the duty of man, the right thing for him, the very condition of his best development.

We may remind ourselves that this applies equally to all kinds of work. It is not uncommon to find among those who call themselves 'working men' a notion that the only kind of work that deserves the name is manual work. They are loth to allow that the men who work with their brains are to be accounted workers at all; and, indeed, this is suggested by their use of the phrase, 'working man,' not as meaning generally the man that works, but specifically the man that works with his hands. This notion is not less unfortunate than it is untrue. It leads men to the habit of thinking about themselves separately from their fellows, as if they had distinct, and perhaps contrary interests; and thus it directly stimulates that class-suspicion which broods like a nightmare upon all things true and generous. All work is equal, if only it be honest: the work of the hand and the work of the head. The real enemy of all workers—whether they work in a factory, or in a shop, or in an office, or in a study, or in a school, or in a legislative chamber, or in a parish church—is the idle man who will not work. It makes no matter where the idle man finds his place in society, rich or poor, cultured or ignorant, he is the enemy of his fellows, a rebel against the foundation law of human society.

2. In the second place the text indicates the true basis of any claim which men may make upon the support of their fellows. As an honest worker, as one, that is, who has not failed to bear his just share of the world's burden, who has contributed his fair proportion to the general effort which has created and sustains society, a man may appeal in his time of need without loss of self-respect to the assistance of his comrades. He has a right of a soldier, wounded

in battle, to the care of his country, whose cause he has maintained. He asks to be allowed to eat in his time of want, because in his time of strength and opportunity he has worked. There is necessarily a give-and-take in society; at every turn we have to make appeal to the kind consideration of our fellows; we are all under obligation to one another; we are all one another's benefactors. It is absurd for any to take honour to himself as if he were independent of his fellows; there is no such thing in the world as such independence, it is the fiction of conceited selfishness.

'None of us,' writes Paul, 'none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself.' It is true; and we are, in the full sense of the term, 'members of one another.' But the important thing for every one of us is to remember and to fulfil the practical duties of this position.

The assumption underlying the mutual dependence of men in society is the universality of work. It is a 'give and take': alas! that some should take all and give nothing. It is well for us to remind ourselves that the moral right to take of the good things of civilized life depends upon the fact that we have honestly given our best efforts to providing them. The idle man, rich or poor, cultured or ignorant, has no claim on the bounty of his fellows, because he gives them nothing. He is a worthless drone, to be despised and abhorred of all honest workers.

3. On a definitely Christian view religion is an element in all right work.

> Work shall be prayer, if all be wrought
> As Thou wouldst have it done.

In olden days this conviction was common. A town would take as its motto '*Laborare est Orare*'—to work is to pray.

It would be a great thing to recover the old sense that in common work men are doing something that is ordained and blessed by God, and that it is part of religion to do it well. For it is the fact that for most people their work is their chief concern in life, and that they have to work till they are tired. Unless religion enters in some way into the round of daily toil there is no room for it, or it is regarded as a speciality, like literature or philosophy, interesting a few people of that turn of mind, an embroidery or decoration, not an essential part of life.

¶ There is good sense and good theology in Jack London's parody of a famous hymn:

> Now I get up to do my work,
> I pray the Lord I may not shirk,
> If I should die before the night,
> I pray the Lord, my work's all right.

It is no doubt more difficult in complicated modern civilization than it was in a more primitive society to see the religious aspect of work. The operations of sowing and reaping, of building and baking, of spinning and weaving are obviously needed for the framework of life, part of Nature's plan, not far removed from Eden. Thus occupied a man can easily feel that he is co-operating with his Creator and fulfilling His purpose. But this is not so readily felt or seen by those tending machines or punching tickets or typing other people's letters, busy at monotonous jobs that seem to have little direct result except the money they bring in.

Yet these jobs are all part of the service men do for one another to maintain and raise the standard of life. One way to increase interest and satisfaction in them is to kindle keener desire for the common welfare and foster the sense that all good work is mutual service. Statesmen can urge this and economists explain it, but religion, too, has its word to say. In serving one another men are serving God who made them brethren. The revival of religion would mean the revival of belief in connexion with all work that it was not just wage-earning but service of others.

Whatever work we undertake, let us do it with a good conscience and a conviction that if we do it well we are serving God and our fellowmen. The chief need is not to Christianize leisure but to Christianize work, so that it is done to the glory of God and contributes to the coming of His Kingdom.

> Save us then, Lord,
> From this shameful disease of sloth,
> From its living death.
> Grant us the glory of Work,
> Whose weariness is the crown of achievement,
> Whose monotony is solid success,
> Whose end is the end of a soldier,
> Harness on back and face to the foe.[1]

[1] John S. Hoyland, *Indian Dawn.*

The Lord of Peace

2 Thess. iii. 16.—'Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means.'

This word 'peace' is one of the greatest of the gospel words. It sounds the depths of the deepest human instinct. It shines into the gloom of the darkest human perplexity with regard to the uncertainty of the future. Peace! And peace always! And peace always by all means! Perhaps there is no word which so entirely expresses both the character and the mission of our Lord, in whose name Paul writes, as does this word 'peace.' For has He not been called 'the Prince of Peace'? Is it not so that those who knew Him best thus described the whole force of His mission? 'He is our peace!' 'He hath made peace!' 'My peace I give unto you!'

1. Peace is a universal desire. And it is an eloquent testimony to the unrest which tortures every heart that the promise of peace should to all seem so fair. It may be presented and aimed at in very ignoble and selfish ways. It may be sought for in cowardly shirking of duty, in sluggish avoidance of effort, in selfish absorption, apart from all the miseries of mankind. It may be sought for in the ignoble paths of mere pleasure, amidst the sanctities of human love, amidst the nobilities of intellectual effort and pursuit. But all men in their workings are aiming at rest of spirit, and only in such rest does blessedness lie.

The tragedy of life is that so many are squandering all their moral resources in seeking after that which is near at hand, did they but know it. The world is full of disappointed, disillusioned, and disheartened men and women who are seeking for peace in the wrong direction. The greatest thing about life is the utter insufficiency of any lower satisfaction than that of God Himself to meet the instinctive need of our souls. The ultimate proof of the gospel that we preach, by which we stand, and in which we live, is the effectiveness of its ministry to unrested souls, who have found in the world sorrow and dispeace and unending dissatisfaction. It is a peace which passes all understanding in its re-creative power, and unending and unfailing inspiration.

2. Peace is not a mere emotional sense of inward satisfaction with things as they are. Still less is peace a fatalistic acceptance of inevitable circumstances. Peace is not a mere unambitious contentment with life. Still less is peace any escape from its pressure and burdens. Peace is harmony with the will and purpose and government of God. Peace is that harmony with God which qualifies men for serious duty, for ceaseless conflict, for fruitful service, and for Christian witness in the world. Peace is a satisfaction of the deep instincts and needs of the soul. Peace is an assurance of the future. These are some of the constituents which go to make up the by-product of peace. And to mention these things is only to make clear to ourselves that such peace can only come from the Lord of Peace Himself. No one else can create such a state of peace in any one's life.

The title is striking. It is not merely the 'God of Peace,' it is 'the Lord of peace,' the One who gives peace because He is Lord, because He is in control, and has sovereign power to give it. The words of Christ Himself are—'These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'

The gift of peace is *the gift of Christ Himself.* We cannot separate Christ's gifts from Christ. The only way to get anything that He gives is to get Him. It is His presence that does everything. If He is with us, the world's annoyances will seem very small. If we keep close to His side He will shield us from the cold blast, from whatever part it blows. If our heart is twined around Him it will partake of the stability and calm of the great heart on which it rests.

When our risen Lord said, in the Upper Chamber, 'Peace be unto you,' He made His great and precious blessing an actual gift. He presented Himself, risen from the tomb, inaccessible to the assaults of death, in His human as in His Divine nature, as an object of exhaustless affection to the human heart. All that commands awe, all that provokes tenderness, all that bids us reverence, and all that obliges us to love, meet in Him; and thus He has commanded the affection—the pure, yet strong, affection—of millions upon millions of human hearts. And along with this affection which He has inspired, He has bestowed as its accompaniment, His great and blessed gift of peace.

He has presented Himself to the human heart as its one really legitimate object. A second object of all but supreme affection creates a schism within the soul, and is fatal to peace. 'A double-minded man,' says St James—a man with two souls (to render him quite literally)—'is unstable in all his ways.' Peace can only be insured when the heart is given, in the first place and supremely, to a single object, and sits easily to all besides.

¶ Your letter to-day was especially comforting and delightful to me. 'Peace I leave with you' has always seemed to me nearly the most lovely and blessed sentence in the New Testament, our Lord's own word in the highest and fullest sense. That it should be peace itself—not peace *if our state of mind is fit to receive it*, but the gift of the state of mind—is very divine. It seems Christ giving Himself (indeed it must be this) is our Peace.[1]

3. Peace is a lasting experience. Not only peace does He give to His people, but 'peace always.' It is not just the transient experience of an hour, when His people meet together for worship, when their thoughts are uplifted by prayer, and by hymn, and by the atmosphere of fellowship. It is a lasting peace covering every possible contingency which now may be veiled in the uncertainty of the future. 'Always'—one of the biggest words in our common speech: it is a word to which nothing needs to be added, and nothing, in fact, can be added. 'Peace always'—when the many duties of life tend to crowd out all thoughts of God; when days of trouble overtake us; when unmerited blame and unappreciated service tend to embitter the spirit; when life is bereft of human love; when death itself is drawing near. 'Peace always'; peace of heart amid endless agitation. It means that there need never be a day or condition when we are without resources to cope with it. In all the pressure of life's uncertainties and confusions and disablements we have the secret and source of peace to survive any challenge.

¶ It is told of a preacher talking with a young man about the peace of God that the young man said—It is not peace young people want, it is thrills. But the preacher pointed out that peace is not a dull resignation. He said to his young friend—'If you were in business on your own account and had to face depressing times and had no capital to fall back upon to tide you over a difficult period, would your mind be at peace?' 'It would not,' was the answer. 'But,' continued the preacher, 'if you had somebody at your back with plenty of resources I take it you could carry on without undue anxiety.' 'I believe so,' replied the young man. 'Well,' said the preacher, 'that is God's peace. Peace is the possession of adequate resources.'

Peace is the boon all hearts are seeking; and the purpose in the counsel of God is that we should all possess it through Christ who is Lord of peace and has the sovereign remedy. The Lord of peace gives peace. He gives it always. He gives it 'at all times in all ways' as the Revised Version has it, or as in the translation of Dr Moffatt, 'continually, whatever comes.'

We ask for Peace, O Lord!
  Thy children ask Thy Peace;
Not what the world calls rest,
  That toil and care should cease,
That through bright sunny hours
  Calm Life should fleet away,
And tranquil night should fade
  In smiling day;
  It is not for such Peace that we would pray.

We ask Thy Peace, O Lord!
  Through storm, and fear, and strife,
To light and guide us on,
  Through a long, struggling life:
While no success or gain
  Shall cheer the desperate fight,
Or nerve, what the world calls
  Our wasted night:
  Yet pressing through the darkness to the light.

[1] *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*, i. 497.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

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